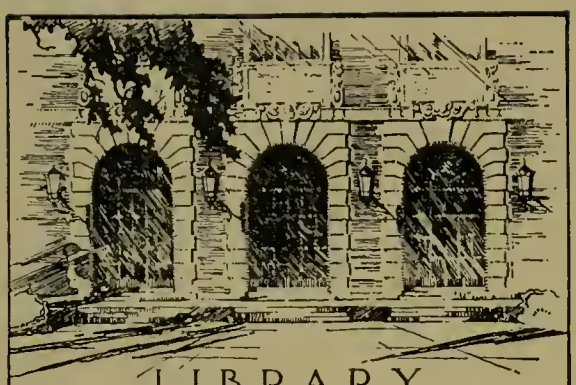

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UNCLE HORACE,

A NOVEL,

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"SKETCHES OF IRISH CHARACTER,"

"THE BUCCANEER,"

&c. &c.

Contentment, Parent of Delight—
So much a stranger to our sight.
GREEN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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UNCLE HORACE.

CHAPTER I.

——————— Under protest
His notes remain,—the wise can guess the rest.

DEATH, with a sweep of his ebon wing, had annihilated one who valued "the good things of this life"—as they are falsely called—far more than those which are for eternity, or are even among the redeeming portions of earthly existence. Mr. Brown Lorton had been born a citizen, realized a splendid fortune by upright traffic, panted for a species of distinction which he never could attain, and died in the struggle,—he fretted himself out of life. Worried by the annoyances which always attend a false position in society,—instead of enjoying what was within his reach, he aimed

at what was totally beyond it,—he knew that his greatest success was sneered at, and that he was an object of contempt even at his own table! His mornings were spent latterly in looking over accounts which had been too long neglected, and his evenings in eating dinners—for the sake of eating. His appetite, according to Uncle Horace, had frequently "exceeded the statute of limitation;" and at last it became bankrupt—an occurrence which, if it had chanced somewhat earlier, might have saved his monied interests from the same destiny! Oh, how miserable it is to look back upon the world, and note those whom a love of display has ruined!—How perfectly has this passion destroyed the beautiful harmony of society!—False appearances, false excitements, false reputations, lead one to the sad conclusion, that all we see, and all we meet, are either merry maskers, or splendid forgers. The poetry of life sinks into its shroud before our eyes; and the dark realities which press upon our notice, cover it, as with a pall!

Brown Lorton's affairs were so confused, that it required all the acuteness of Uncle Horace to unravel and arrange them. When he had done so, he found that the brother, who but few years before had withdrawn from business with a noble fortune, had died one or two thousand pounds "worse than nothing," and that it would be necessary to sell the estate, (which, as we have observed, joined that of Lord Norley, and upon which, it will be remembered, his Lordship set so much value because of its "advantages,") to fulfil the engagements into which he had entered previous to his death. Mary's wedding was of course postponed. And, indeed, notwithstanding the reputation of Uncle Horace's wealth, poor Brown Lorton had hardly been laid in his grave, when many a shrewd mamma smiled most graciously upon Harry Mortimer, in the hope that "circumstances" might altogether put off the match which had been considered certain. Horace Brown's strong and manly feelings had been greatly shocked by the suddenness of his brother's exit from

mortal life. When those who have come into the world some time after our own entrance into it, depart before us, the reality of *death* strikes, in all its terrors, upon our minds. His *younger* brother was dead! At first this feeling solely and painfully occupied the worthy trader; and when its bitterness had in a degree subsided, he felt, if truth must be told, most grievously the want of some one to grumble at.

Although the state of his brother's affairs gave him abundant cause of complaint, he was too generously minded to censure one, "whose lips were closed to reply!" Mrs. Brown Lorton, at such a time, he could not disagree with; besides, she was likely to be dependent on his bounty; and that being the case, despite his dislike, he would have sacrificed his life sooner than have permitted her to feel the loneliness and embarrassment of her situation. Mary, of course, was at all times exempt from his ill humour—so that now the only sufferer was Peter Pike, who, to do him justice, deserved Mrs. Claggitt's professional compliment: "I

think," she said, "Peter Pike is like a tough steak,—the better for beating."

It is impossible to imagine a more perplexing situation than that in which Uncle Horace was placed on the death of his brother: had Mr. Lorton remained in business, and even died insolvent, he could have settled the accounts in a few hours; but the nature as well as the multiplicity of his engagements plagued him exceedingly. He decided, at last, that all the servants, except Magdalene (whom, indeed, Mary had ceased to consider as one), should be discharged; that Mary and her mother should retire from the world altogether until after Mary's marriage,—proposing, at the same time, that they should return to the neighbourhood of Liverpool; but Harry (whom Uncle Horace somewhat spitefully declared had already a taint of the aristocracy), knowing how disagreeable such a retreat would be both to Mrs. Lorton and his stately uncle, urged that mother and daughter should take possession of a Lodge which was to let in the neighbour-

hood of Ryde, near a marine villa where Lord and Lady Norley always spent a portion of the summer and autumnal months. Of course Uncle Horace would cede this, or any other point, to his beloved niece; and whatever her lover wished, she wished. Sorrow had already softened, if not subdued, the lightness of her spirits, and the wavering state of her mother's mind kept her in a perpetual fever of nervous excitement.

All these matters being settled at last, next came the question, whether the estate which Lord Norley had so highly valued in prospect as his nephew's inheritance, should, or should not, be sold to pay the residue of Brown Lorton's debts. "Sell it, dear uncle, by all means, and quickly!" exclaimed Mary, who had been sitting with her uncle all the morning: for, strange to say, the only anxiety her mother had shown was to leave London, —she seemed indifferent to all pecuniary arrangements, and heaped upon Miss Maxwell (to whom Horace Brown gave a brief and sharp dismissal, the precise nature of

which Mary was unacquainted with) presents, —not of jewels, for they had disappeared,— but of plate, clothes, and bijouterie, which Mary could not avoid perceiving she took as if receiving a right, not accepting a favour. "Sell it, dear uncle, by all means!" repeated Mary; "I would rather you did, for I could not know the quiet of an hour's repose if a single debt of my father's remained unpaid."

"Good girl, dear girl, excellent girl!" said Horace Brown. "That's a genuine English feeling, the sort of feeling I esteem. The money, Mary—the absolute purchase money of the estate—is but dust in the balance. I do not care a straw about it—if your poor father owed ten times the sum I should not care, I could not feel it—it should all be paid, twenty shillings in the pound, just and honest! But, Mary, *it was the worst investment I ever knew!*—for a man of business, absolutely disgraceful!—could never pay one and a half per cent. Think of that, Mary!—think of that!" And Uncle Horace took a large pinch of snuff

—a thing he seldom did, except when greatly excited.

Mary had hardly left the library, where her uncle remained looking over leases, and bills, and bonds, and rates, taxes, mortgages, and all the perplexing mysteries invented by the law for the benefit of lawyers, when Lord Norley was announced. After the utterance of many polite sentences, he inquired if Mr. Brown really intended disposing of the estate which joined his own, and which "poor Mr. Lorton" had been so anxious to secure to his family.

Uncle Horace replied, that he had it in contemplation; adding, he considered it a bad investment.

Lord Norley's expressive lip curled contemptuously, while he inquired "if Mr. Brown was at all aware that, in the proposed union between Miss Lorton and his nephew, *that* estate had been *taken into consideration* and valued at twenty times its real value; simply from its situation—its influence—in short, its political influence!"

Horace Brown was always awake to *monied* interest, but not at all alive to political necessity. And Lord Norley wound, and wound, and quoted, and illustrated, and talked,—what would have bewildered any man but Uncle Horace,—who kept his mind steadily fixed upon the "bad investment," and remained unmoved. At last Lord Norley hinted that, as his nephew was not actually married, circumstances might arise to prevent the union. His Lordship subsequently explained, that he never intended to allude to the possibility of such an occurrence, that his regard for Miss Lorton, his nephew's affections, and a host of additional circumstances—private feelings, public duty, and various other causes—could not produce such an effect. But Uncle Horace fired at the dishonourable insinuation.

"If," he exclaimed, "the purchase of ten such estates were necessary to the security of my niece's happiness, she should have them; but with all my partiality for Harry Mortimer, your Lordship must permit me to say that, as I am now the guardian of Mary Lorton's

honour and fortune, I would not—in one word, *I would not,* my Lord, suffer her to be *forced* into the noblest family in England!" Luckily, even as he pronounced the word England, Lady Ellen Revis entered while Uncle Horace was in "his flurry," and just as her father had nearly forgotten his dignity. Good angel that she was, she immediately understood the matter, and commenced her pacific arrangements. She succeeded in convincing Horace Brown, that though the money laid out by his brother on the purchase of that estate was more, considerably more, than its worth, yet its position gave it a fictitious value, which it was in the power of political influence to transform into more than gold; that it would be greatly to Harry's advantage it should be retained; that (she could speak confidently) Lady Norley loved Mary too well ever to think of any one else as her niece; that her father esteemed her beyond all price; and that in every way her friend had more than realized each expectation they had formed, for that the fortune "her good uncle" still pro-

mised far exceeded that which rumour had given her! All this was most judiciously mingled with compliments to the one and the other, so admirably turned and toned, that both parties thought them really truths.

Then, she called Mary Lorton down, before Uncle Horace was able to prevent her; knowing well that two good effects would result from her appearance: first of all, Uncle Horace would be at once softened by her presence; and secondly, the subject of their conversation could not be renewed before her.

It was the first time that Lord Norley had seen Mary since her father's death; and there was something inconceivably lovely in the contrast between that fair throat and face and the deep mourning which clouded without obscuring its beauty. Really persons of dark or sallow complexions should be prohibited by Act of Parliament from wearing sables,—they look like the reanimated bodies of those for whom they mourn,—their shadow lies heavy on the earth,—they personify despair deprived for ever of hope! But the countenances of

the young and fair, when dressed in black, depict hope rising from the grave!

Mary advanced to his Lordship with a trembling step, while her eyes filled with tears; she took the hand he extended, not without emotion, towards her, and pressed it to her lips; he kissed her brow as the tears gushed down her cheeks, and whispered, "My dear Miss Lorton —my dear child." Lady Ellen looked triumphantly towards Uncle Horace, as well as to say, "There, one look from your Mary is all-sufficient." And Uncle Horace returned the glance with a smile of double meaning,—for it was proud in a double sense.—"I know what the persuasion of her beauty must effect, but I am now its guardian." Horace Brown's own pride was struggling with his strong affection for Harry Mortimer; nor was he insensible to the fact, that he had a power within his grasp which with one word would make a man, constituted as Lord Norley was, bow down before him—the power of wealth. The two uncles, however—thanks to Lady Ellen—separated without any further misunderstand-

ing that day; that they disliked each other was almost a matter of course.

The estate was retained,—the mansion put under repair, to fit it, at the expiration of a certain number of months, for the reception of the bride and bridegroom,—the establishment in Park Lane dismissed, to the infinite gratification of Peter Pike's master, and of Peter himself, who had learnt to eschew Mrs. Claggitt as the spirit of evil, and to avoid even the pretty maid whose brother once acted as his guide; having discovered in her what he termed an "immoral propensity," but which in fact was nothing more than a genius for flirting—which the mistress frequently terms "immorality" or "levity" in her servant, though she practises it herself, and would be most enraged if *her* propriety was questioned in so doing.

These arrangements were completed, and every lawful debt of Brown Lorton's discharged, before the sickle had finished its allotted task in the few corn-fields which divided Lord Norley's villa in the Isle of Wight from

the cottage *ornée*, where it was finally agreed upon Mary and her mother should pass the time that must intervene before Mary could become the wife of Harry Mortimer.

Despite her sables, and the extraordinary state of her mother's mind, Mary's heart bounded at the idea of the freedom of green fields, and the luxury of retirement. Lady Norley and Lady Ellen intended coming to Norley Lodge in October; Harry was already there. Uncle Horace had promised not only to install them in their new dwelling, but to return and spend the Christmas with them, on condition—and a strange condition it was—that Peter Pike was to be installed as major-domo of Mrs. Lorton's establishment,—an arrangement which a few months previously she would have negatived at once, but to which she now submitted quietly, as well as to all other wishes, whether expressed by Uncle Horace or by Mary.

Indeed, with so much delicacy did Horace Brown manage the affairs of his deceased brother, that even Mary had no idea of the

extent of his bounty. It is most difficult for people *who have* been rich to imagine themselves poor; there is nothing like it in the world, except the bitterness which the young experience at finding themselves friendless,—for the heart that in the warmth of its affection would benefit the whole world, to find itself deserted by the object of its sympathy, is indeed miserable!

"You will touch your hat, Job," said Mrs. Claggitt, as she watched the approach of the carriage that was to convey "her late family" to Southampton.

She had been strolling with Job in the park, in the hope that, perhaps, she might induce a declaration leading to an arrangement on a principle of mutual advantage, tending to the establishment of a *gin*-palace or eating-house, conducted by *Mr.* and *Mrs.* Harris. But, alas! no such declaration came: and having thrown down her eyes for three minutes without effect, she ventured to throw them up again, and caught sight of Peter Pike on the coach-box of a travelling chariot.

"I will touch my hat, if it pleases you; but with the exception of Miss Lorton, there is not one of the set worth remembering," replied Job—a reply Mrs. Claggitt did not like. She was on the point of inquiring if he meant to include her in "the set," and then she thought she might elicit an answer, in Job's present humour, destructive to her hopes,—*that* would be imprudent.

So she said, "They were your first friends, Mister Harris."

"They found me useful, and engaged me," replied the man of plate-powder; "I, finding them useless, would have discharged myself."

"If they had not discharged you," chimed in Mrs. Claggitt; adding, with imprudent spitefulness—(how seldom are prudence and spitefulness twin-born)—"it's bad to throw away dirty water till you can get clean!—*you* have not yet got another place, Job."

"I am, I own, particular," replied the puppy, twirling his cane as he spoke; "I do not like to throw myself away; and after the gloom and fatigue of a funeral, why—it's my principle —one wants repose!"

"Ay, Mister Job, so one does; and then one has calls to make upon friends of one's own, which one cawnt exactly make when one's in place, you know; not but what I have enough to have a place of my own, only a lone woman, Mr. Job,—a lone woman is—a lone woman, you know! and apt to be imposed on, and misrepresented, and sneered at, and her innocent little ways turned into harm. Now, I dares to say, there's many would make mischief like about you and I—old fellow-servants enjoying the ruralities of Kensington Gardens, where you gets in like a gentleman when out of livery."

"Ay!" exclaimed Job, bitterly; "I remember; that beastly board about dogs and servants in livery: and Lord John's walet tried to get me over to their side, by telling me, that when their reform bill passed, that board would be down the first thing,—but there's the board still!—them's the things as needs reform! I've said so twenty times—if they're such friends of the people, let them show it; that's my ambition!—only it's wonderful how

they take the grandeur, quite natural, as soon as they get it!"

"Now, Job, here's the carriage—bow, Job, bow. You know Miss Lorton will be Lady Norley one of these days—there's her bonnet at the window; but, as I live!" she added, in a voice of great dissatisfaction, "it is *not* Miss Lorton, but that jade Magdalene—*she* travelling inside, truly—she!—marry, come up!—well, if ever!—a chariot, and a slip of a lady's maid put inside—well, if ever!—no, it's past belief—Job, if you bow, you may go to the Devil for me." And Mrs. Claggitt turned her back as the carriage passed!

CHAPTER II.

'Tis miching mallecho; it seems mischief.
Belike, this show imports the argument of the play.
HAMLET.

ON the long, unarchitectural-looking pier of Ryde, apart from the crowd that was hastening to the steam-boat about to sail for the main land, were two figures; and, however different their rank in life, there was evidently a more than commonly friendly understanding between them. One carried a small valise on his shoulder, and a carpet bag in his hand; the other was unencumbered, save by a green silk umbrella, carefully folded and drawn into its case. Though the day was warm and sunny, and the month August, the gentleman was clad to the very ears in a drab great coat, above the collar of which rose the folds of a green silk handkerchief: his carriage was free

and independent, and he occasionally waved his hand to a young lady and gentleman, who returned his courtesy, from one of the heights which overlook the most beautiful scenery amid the world of waters. As he approached near the spot of embarkation he stopped, and pulled the folds of the kerchief from his lips, so that his voice could be heard by his attendant.

"Peter."

"Yes, Sir."

"Peter, I need not tell you to be very attentive to my niece—to transfer to her all the duty, which, to do you justice, you pay me."

"Ah, Sir, that I cannot do, if I may say so! for the sort of duty—the feeling of duty—is totally different, which one feels for a lady and a gentleman. Now, you see, Sir, it is this: —I should feel myself bound to protect Miss Mary; and you, being my master, *are bound to protect me.*"

"Protect *you,*" said Uncle Horace. "Gad so! you are a pretty fellow to protect, truly."

"The race is not always to the swift, or the

battle to the strong," replied Peter, shaking his head, and with an aspect of meekness and devotion which did not at all accord with his usual aspect and manner. Uncle Horace eyed him from head to foot, as he rested the valise on a bench in the recess.

"I see, Peter, you are getting on another tack, with Cupid again as your pilot. God help and defend me from a man who is always falling in love! That's something the jade Kate of Carisbrook, or another of the Methodist girls put into your head. Ah, Peter, Peter! your religion just now is a pretty face and a pair of black eyes, instead of touching your heart by the soundness of its doctrine. Instead of attending to the directions I have given you, you will keep dancing from prayer-meeting to prayer-meeting, and ——"

"I really ask your honor's pardon," said Peter, respectfully; "but I do not call to mind any time, when my infirmity, as you call it, ever made me neglectful of my duty; and in regard of the texts of Scripture ——"

"Enough, enough. You are a harmless

fool; but a fool" (Peter touched his hat)—"I know you mean well; and I can only say once more, look carefully to the wishes of your young mistress; and, Peter, if there is any thing you observe she requires — anything *above* what is placed in the banker's hands, why you know, Peter, where to write—a humour or a fancy—no matter what; and, Peter, no letting out!—not a word or a hint, nothing of the sort;—I'd rather my right hand was cut off, than a thread of her feelings injured."

There were many more last words between master and man; some of them rough, some smooth; that is, rough on the one part, smooth on the other. Horace Brown pulled up the kerchief so as to shut out the breeze, which he imagined blew more freshly than a true-born Englishman ought to inhale from the French coast; and Peter Pike stood bare-headed on the pier, as the vessel left her moorings:—then, when his master folded his arms on the railing, so as to catch the last glimpse of his niece and her lover, Peter resumed his covering, and remained watching the motion of

the wheels which impelled the steam-ship on its way. The sight of the broad sea is ever exciting—it brings with it a world of thoughts and feelings. If the sensation be a new one, it is, indeed, overpowering.

I remember once travelling with a young gentleman from Paris to Boulogne, who had no motive for his journey except a desire to see the ocean. His curiosity on the subject was quite insatiable—all his questions were in some way or other connected with the sea; he was evidently a gentleman, and one of good education, and yet his mania was irresistible. One would have imagined him bewitched at his birth by a sea nymph—if a sea nymph could have had access to his cradle in *la belle ville de Paris.* How eager were his questions about sea-fish—and sea-birds—and sea-weeds—and corals—and reefs—and rocks—and rigging—and anchors. He had evidently not associated much with the English, for he expected that even English ladies were well informed upon nautical matters. He had read, I believe, every book that

had ever been written upon sea subjects—his eyes kindled, and his cheek flushed, when we talked of pirates or buccaneers; and more than once I asked him why he had not been a sailor. As we drew near the end of our wearisome journey, I certainly never saw any man so excited. He was constantly pointing to each blue streak that appeared on the horizon, and inquiring if "that was the sea." Night closed in, and his disappointment was absolutely painful:—the moon rose, and his spirits revived. "He should see the sea by moonlight:—he had heard it was beautiful by moonlight—he had treasured up his money that he might visit the sea—and the sea at Boulogne he had heard was more picturesque than anywhere else. He hoped the next morning would be fine, that he might behold the sunbeams dancing on the waters:—and he hoped that there might be a storm at noon, for then he should see waves. Alas! he was compelled to leave Boulogne *next* evening on his return to Paris—he had with difficulty obtained leave of absence from his office even for that time!"

The next morning, as we were stepping on board the steamer, there was our traveller on the pier, with folded arms, contemplating the mighty object of his curiosity—our bows, and smiles, and adieus remained unanswered:—he had eyes and ears only for the sea!

Peter may be excused for loitering on the long *woody* pier of Ryde. If this pier were what is generally called handsome, it would lose its interest and beauty:—I love its rough timbers—its rugged yet bright appearance—in such beautiful keeping with the scenery of the most lovely island in the world. Peter thought he might wait till the steam-vessel was out of sight; and as his eye wandered from the decreasing chimney to the cliffs, it rested on one of the small coast-boats, the sail of which was gallantly filled by the land breeze, as it steered along the shore: besides the steersman there were two gentlemen in the little craft, and upon one of them Peter's gaze was earnestly fixed. He could not withdraw his eyes—the person who arrested his attention chatted occasionally with his

companion, but was more constantly occupied in smoking his cigar, as he leaned carelessly back in the boat. Peter Pike twisted and writhed so as to obtain a sight of his countenance in every variety of position: first in profile, then in full-face; then he bobbed up —then down—then muttered—then, forgetting the pretty Methodist, cursed the ill fortune which had taken his master from the island, at the very time when, according to Peter's opinion, he ought to remain on it. Suddenly turning round, he encountered the broad stare of a jolly tar, who had evidently been much amused at his movements.

"Could you overtake her?" inquired Peter, eagerly.

"Bless ye, to be sure I could. What is there to overtake?" replied the sailor, turning his quid, and hitching up his trowsers at the same time.

"Then here's half-a-crown for you—down on the nail—prompt payment!" exclaimed Pike; "so lose no time."

"Lose no time," repeated the tar, as turn-

ing over the silver he put it into his waistcoat pocket. "No, I take it, a lugger like yourself 'ill be more likely to lose time than Jack Nimble:—so crowd sail, old boy."

Peter followed, and though he considered himself a good walker, the sailor rolled along at a pace which the serving-man found it difficult to keep up with; at last, having tumbled first over the seats, and then over the oars, regardless of the nods and winks of the merry tars, he seated himself, so that his eyes rested on the steam-boat, which was disappearing far more rapidly than he desired. After rowing for about five minutes, Peter turned to Jack Nimble, and said—

"My friend, I don't think, somehow, you are going the right road:—she's farther off than ever."

"Who's farther off than ever?" interrogated Jack, looking rather stormy at the poor land crab.

"Who? why the steamer, to be sure," replied Peter. "You told me you could overtake her!"

"I'm blowed if I told you any sitch nonsense, master," said the sea-god, resting on his oar.

"Why you did!" vociferated Peter.

"I did not. I say, avast, man! D'ye think Jack Nimble a fool? I told you I could overtake that craft that's elbowing round the point there, and so I can:" and again he feathered his oar in the salt-sea spray.

"I want to have nothing to do with craft," replied poor Peter. "So if you can't overtake the steam-ship, I'd thank you to put me on shore again."

"I'm sure you're old enough to know your own mind!" exclaimed Jack, surlily; "after cutting as many capers as Harlequin in a play, with your peepers stuck on that sail-boat, you asked me if I could overtake her, and I said yes; and then you offered me the shiner."

"Which I'll thank you for," said Peter, gravely. "I'm not going to hand you over two shillings and sixpence, without value received."

Jack again turned the quid, and said—

"Oh, yes, my hearty, you shall have its value, in a glass of Neptune's grog."

Peter did not comprehend the sailor—how could he? but he was very glad to step on the pier; and then asked Jack for the "value." The sailor handed him a tin can of salt water, amid the shouts of the assembled Jacks; and Peter, though pugnacious enough, was glad to skulk off with the loss of his half-crown, and the knowledge that his master was gone when he thought his presence was most necessary. When he reached the entrance of the pier, the boat which had caused him such astonishment and anxiety was out of sight.

CHAPTER III.

———————She loves to walk
In the bright visions of empyreal light,
By the green pastures, and the fragrant meads,
Where the perpetual flowers of Eden blow.

LAMB.

IF Mary Lorton were requested to point out the period of her existence during which she experienced the greatest tranquillity, if not the greatest happiness, I think she would say the few first weeks of her sojourn in the Isle of Wight. Her enjoyments were pure as her own soul!—in the society of Lady Norley and Lady Ellen Revis, she possessed advantages which none better than herself knew how to estimate:—retirement is the true test of good breeding: "Company manners" never yet held out three rainy days in a country house; but the natural dignity, blended with the sweetness, of a true-born lady, and the sadness, perhaps, of a woman whose domestic happi-

ness had never been a matter of the slightest moment to a man she had tenderly loved, rendered Lady Norley an object of devotional attraction to Mary's enthusiastic disposition. Lady Norley was always the same—she had learnt to subdue herself—she said that the task had not been an easy one; perhaps not, for her spirit was proud — her acquirements various; and she had discovered, at a very early period of her wedded life, a necessity for exerting them, to save her from *ennui* or dissipation. The death of her sons had nearly broken her heart:—she had hung over their beds of suffering while their father was immersed in every description of pleasure, which he called business: — she had smoothed their pillows and closed their eyes; and, but for Lady Ellen, she would have prayed "to have been with them at peace."

Nearly two years had elapsed since the youngest died; and Lady Norley had become so far resigned, that it would be difficult to say whether age or sorrow had shed its snows over her raven hair. Lady Ellen Revis is, by

this time, known to us all:—her talents were ever willingly exercised for the amusement of her private friends; and a Mr. and Miss Leslie, brother and sister, had accepted Lord and Lady Norley's invitation to spend the autumn at the Lodge:—they were precisely the sort of people that enjoy the country themselves, and make it delightful to others. Miss Leslie was of a *certain age,* her brother a few years younger. Harry Mortimer nominally belonged to the party at Norley Lodge;—but the hours that Mary Lorton did not pass there, he passed at the cottage, where Mary's sorrow remained enshrined; for happy as she was, she had one cause of anxiety—one cause of grief—that at times weighed down her very heart.

Mrs. Lorton, from the moment she took the gold and jewels from her daughter, had not shaken off the apathy she evinced after her object had been accomplished, and its consequent excitement exhausted. Mary had no opportunity of judging how long this frame of mind would continue—for her father's death

occurred on the following day—since that event Mrs. Lorton would read or work, and reply when asked a question, but more generally remain as if unconscious she had been spoken to. Sometimes she would rally, but never so as to enable her daughter to revert to the mysterious circumstance which at times occupied much of her thoughts. Well may I say "at times;" and those "times" became less and less frequent, as days and weeks passed on. There is in the young an ardent and happy buoyancy of spirit which casts off sorrow without an effort—thawing the ice, that as we advance in years chokes up the springs which at first flow on in the perpetual sunshine of a mind at ease. Mary felt happy when ministering to her mother—gathering for her fresh flowers—singing to her new songs—placing, with a wisdom beyond her years, such books upon her table as lead the mind to the blessed and revivifying effects of religious hope and holy faith, or others of lighter literature, calculated to amuse, without awakening the pas-

sions, or arousing the sympathies of our nature. She would not suffer her to see a dying bird, or a faded leaf, or to hear a melancholy melody. She did not torment her with questions as to *why* she was sorrowful; but she exerted every means in her power to prevent her from being so.

Magdalene was her handmaid in heart and soul—she lived absolutely but to fulfil all that Mary desired:—the perfect union of those two girls was beautiful to look upon—the deep gratitude of the one, the affectionate attention of the other—the respect—the homage which Magdalene paid to Mary, and the delicacy which Mary evinced in her conduct towards Magdalene. "Some people's manners are formed," said Lady Norley one day, speaking of her intended niece,—"some people's manners are formed by art, some by nature: art is a clever teacher, but her pupils rarely do her perpetual credit; nature is a gentle mother, and her children love her too well ever to forget her instructions. Mary Lorton has been

taught of both,—in her, art polished the work which nature commenced; yet she was too well instructed of nature to become artful."

When Harry repeated to her this compliment, she smiled on him even more sweetly than usual, and asked him if he thought she deserved it. An ordinary lover would have sworn "yes!" but he said it in a tone that made her happy.

It must not be supposed that Harry was idle in this retirement. Mary's society was to him the sweet dream of his boyhood more than realized; in his youthful days he had felt himself almost presumptuous in aspiring to her love;—for, let us reason about it as we will, there is something to a high-minded and honourable man degrading beyond expression in a sense of poverty—it meets him at every turn—it uplifts its squalid and bony finger, pointing in bitter mockery to all that his soul desires, and yet cannot obtain—it steals more sharply through the garments than the freezing fog of November's evil days—it chills the current of his blood—it stands like a spectre

between him and his ambition—it untunes the sweetest cadence of his voice—it hangs like lead upon his footsteps—it turns his milk of kindness to the bitterest gall—it throws a funereal pall upon his genius, and tolls the death note when the joy bells should have sounded! Despite the delicately-bestowed favours with which Uncle Horace loaded his young friend, still the knowledge that they were bestowed—that they were favours, not rights—stung him to the very quick of a proud spirit; and though the idea never once occurred to Mary in their childish quarrels, it haunted him. "She knows me poor, she must despise me!" This, added to the irksomeness of a mercantile life, and the knowledge that he was neglected by his aristocratic relatives, often made Harry fractious and capricious in days gone by. A *proud-poor* man is rarely amiable,—rarely considered so, at all events,—and Harry had ever been either ready to bristle up, or grow quite strange, at the least word or look—which Mary had forgotten ere it was said or done. Now things

were changed—his station was acknowledged; even Peter Pike observed, that "Master Harry was grown mighty civil, and friendly, and *soft*, to what he used to be." Prosperity is the true sunshine of a generous soul,—in which its fruits grow *ripe*, not *rank*.

For myself, I never could understand what people meant by saying, "that love occupied a man's *whole soul*." I should think (I speak with all reverence) such a soul most unworthy its alliance with the Deity—a single passion may have predominating influence, but the soul is too vast to be occupied by but one. Harry Mortimer loved Mary Lorton more and more deeply every day—every hour her mind was unfolding its excellence and its beauties—even as a rose unfolds its petals to the sun; *the shower had fallen*, but to render it more perfect; sorrow had done the work of time, and added a portion of the wisdom of the serpent to the gentleness of the dove; but love did not occupy his whole soul,—it was *mingled* with all his thoughts, and sometimes his dream of young ambition would be destroyed by the

vision of his lovely bride; still he laboured hard to inform his mind, as every young man ought, on the moral and political state of his country; he did more than many would have done,—he endeavoured to judge impartially of the great and important changes which were every day occurring in its legislature—a legislature in which, one of these days, he anticipated a seat—and he studied the rise and fall of ancient kingdoms, with a view to see if an analogy existed in any way between the countries of the old world and the blessed land whose interests were one with his own. A man, in any, but particularly in an elevated station, must be either a slave or a fool who takes no interest in the politics of his country; it is a duty he owes his fellow-subjects to see that what is good is neither injured nor overthrown —to watch the interests, not of his own particular *clique,* but of his fellow-subjects—to guard that one class does not encroach upon the privileges of the other—to render to "Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," but to render no more.

There were some amongst our modern patriots who made Harry smile—men who wrote, while diamonds glittered on their fingers, "Of the Distress and Slavery of England;" who muttered with mellifluous gentleness of the "tyranny of the upper classes," of "appropriation," and "sinecures," while their servants trembled before them; and they were publicly known as "having an itching palm," and an earnest desire for high places, either at home or abroad.

One, in particular, he knew—who affirmed, and that boldly, that "a monarchical government was dangerous to a free people;" yet he would not suffer those "free people" to do or say what they pleased if it opposed his opinion, or militated against his interests or enjoyments: he had been all his life a neglectful husband and a stern father, but his party extolled the purity of his principles—at which Harry was astonished until his eyes were opened by the discovery, that those who sat in judgment were not qualified to judge, seeing they were entirely ignorant of what

"purity of principle" was. Notwithstanding the glare and glitter that surrounded him, Harry saw many of the strings that worked the puppets; and was much astonished to observe what a small quantity of strength sets a mighty machine in motion.

Lady Ellen laughed when he expressed to her this astonishment; and said, that a closer acquaintance with the political scene-shifters would astonish him still more. "It is the fashion," she said, "now-a-days to set people by the ears, by shouting 'freedom;' while the state gipsies, having previously informed them of the high honours they are born to (for which information, of course, they have also been previously paid), pick their pockets in the *melée*, and thus secure a double harvest."

"You are quite a politician, Ellen!"

"Not I!—if I were a man I would be: but, as it is," she added, "I see, I think, I laugh; —nothing more."

Mary was often much astonished at the hardihood which Lady Ellen displayed in combating her father's opinions; she was the

only person of his intimates who ever seemed to breathe freely in his company. Many persons are awed at first by a goodly presence and a noble bearing, but the dread wears off, and they become at their ease after a time. With Lord Norley the case was different; he was courtly and gracious at first, but the more you knew of him, the more you felt that he was a difficult and a dangerous man. Indeed Mary trembled before him, though he was more conciliating and polite to her than he was to the generality of young ladies: fortunately for Mary's comfort he seldom honoured his family or the Lodge with his company, though Harry received frequent letters from him on political subjects.

It was one of those delicious moonlight nights which seemed ripened into the fulness of beauty by the influence of autumn—when the foliage of the trees grows rich, and varied in its richness—and the landscape teems with the blessed produce of industry. The sky was so clear, that each star shone out in its full brightness, undimmed by cloud or vapour

—the moon was in her majesty, holding her gallant court, and giving audience to her silver legions. She seemed, as Lady Ellen, Mr. Lister, and the young lovers gazed from the sands upon her glory, more like a thing of life than a mysterious world—it was hard to imagine a world of such surpassing purity tainted by inhabitants—to Mary she conveyed the idea of the soul of some everlasting and benevolent spirit. The ocean, in its expanse, shone like a mirror, reflecting back the lustre of the heavenly gems to their own sky—the ripple of the waters curled as it touched the strand, and rested for an instant like a wreath of snow, where a dark rock or jagged stone obstructed its way, and then the white foam melted and disappeared!—the sea-birds were all at rest, but many of the creeks and bays sent forth their fishermen, whose nets, as they cast them into the sea, shone in the moonlight as though their meshes were of silver thread: there lay the fishing-boats on the wide waters, silent, save that now and then the voice of a sailor might be heard

shouting to his fellow, or a verse of one of old Dibdin's glorious songs float from a distant boat, as if she were animated by the spirit of a Sea King!

"How little," said Lady Ellen, "do those who drive along the Esplanade at Brighton, visit the East and West Cliff, and promenade the Pier, know of the beauty or the majesty of the ocean as it flows from the hand of the Almighty! The sea at Brighton always makes me think of the efforts of man to restrain the unrestrainable—for though his object is not attained, he succeeds in disfiguring what he cannot overcome."

Mr. Leslie said this was very true; and Mary said what she thought (she was leaning on Harry's arm at the time), "that if ever there was a heaven on earth, it was the Isle of Wight," — a common-place observation enough, but not perhaps a common feeling.

"I hope, Mary," said her lover, "that next year we shall again be here; I think we should like it better even than Lorton Hall, though it is the *persons*, not the place, who form the paradise."

"Yet," replied Mary, "Adam and Eve did not think so when they quitted the garden of Eden."

"No," said Lady Ellen, "because they had sinned."

"If that were really the cause," observed Harry, as he held a long tuft of sea-weed so as to catch the moonlight, "I fear few of us should realize Paradise. Who is there that has not sinned?"

"Speak for your own sex, if you please, cousin," said Lady Ellen. "If Adam had met the serpent first, he would have yielded more quickly to temptation than Eve; besides, he was cowardly about the matter, and threw the blame upon his wife,—a habit which he bequeathed to his heirs male (as papa would say) to all eternity."

"You are always severe upon us men," said Harry, smiling; "but I forgive you, if Mary will."

"I dare say Lady Ellen knows best; for she knows the world better than I do," replied Mary.

"Mary, you are a renegade," quoth her lover; "you forget that I overheard you expounding to Magdalene the other morning, the legitimacy of man's authority."

"A bad beginning, I declare—a most foolish commencement," laughed Lady Ellen. "Women are not called upon either to expound or acknowledge any such thing, because men will be sure to exact it. Do not shake your head, child, in this sentimental light. You said just now that I knew the world better than you; and so I ought; I could not have lived so long 'in its best circles,' as the fashionable novels have it, without tasting of its bitterness. Oh, how blessed to escape from its prisons, and feel the freedom of such a scene as this!" She looked around and above her with evident emotion; and then, after a pause, turning to Mary, added, "And to know and feel, that though ye are but three, there is one incorruptible heart between the mystic number."

"And which, may I ask, do you consider, as Major Blaney would say, 'so highly gifted?'" inquired Mr. Lister.

"Why, Mr. Lister, you are, you know, simply a man of the world; consequently, finding your heart long ago a useless incumbrance, you either cast it out, or gave it some sedative which has effectually destroyed its operation. So you see, in either case, I hold it—*non est inventus*. My good cousin is to be a statesman—a statesman, not a patriot, you understand—so that the idea of his heart being ever taken into con——"

"My dear Lady Ellen," interrupted Mary, "why will you suppose any such thing? besides, indeed, I do not wish my heart to be complimented at the expense of ——"

"Harry," added Lady Ellen. "Ah, Mary, when I look beyond the present into the vista of coming years, I see my cousin inflexible—stern and upright—earnest and spirited at *his onset*—worn out at last by contending feelings or contending interests—opposed—sneered at—lampooned—either the tool or the victim of party—dragged from his domestic circle—holding out, as young men do at first, against temptation, but yielding gradually to the be-

lief that patriotism is but a remnant of the barbarous ages, and that, to keep up his station, he must do as others do!—change his opinions—be converted by a sudden light, to the belief that whatever tends to promote his own individual advantage must be for the good of his country—while you, Mary, will at first triumph in his glory; I see you, radiant with hope and exultation, for a woman always rejoices in her husband's patriotism—he glories in his country, *she* in him—that is the proper state of affairs, is it not, gentlemen? Ay, ay, Mary—yet man turns, and turns, and turns, while woman remains inflexible; and when Harry sees the necessity of 'state necessity and existing circumstances,' your uncorrupted heart will weep tears of anguish over his apostacy, though you will love him still, for (here is another fact) a man's unworthiness does not diminish woman's love."

"Mary and myself should be obliged for your prophecy, Lady Ellen," said Harry, more than half angry.

"I do not suppose you will, though you

ought," she replied; "for prophecies are useful, if they teach us to *avoid* what would lead to their fulfilment."

"You did not always prophesy thus," said Mary.

"Perhaps not!" laughed Lady Ellen. "The Sibyl has her moods."

The little party strolled along the sands in silence until they came under Shanklin. The cottage, in which Mrs. Lorton resided, was not far from that pastoral village, and before they ascended the steep path that led to their homes, they paused to survey the quiet yet immense beauty which surrounded them on every side.

The window of the fisherman's hut, that nestles so closely to the base of the cliff, emitted a long stream of light, which rested on the shingle like the trail of some spirit fire: at first, from within, came the voices of merry children—then all was hushed—the light for a time obscured, as if some one passed between it and the window—then it shone again—the father of the family was reading

the Word of God to his children—his boat was carefully stowed above high-water mark—and a couple of trusty dogs slept, or rather seemed to sleep, upon the fishing-nets. Not a single cloud obscured the least portion of the heavens; all was glad and happy in the smiles of its Creator; the repose of sea and sky was so profound, that every word the old man uttered was heard distinctly by the high-born and the beautiful who listened to his accents.

There is something more than commonly holy in cottage piety: it is so evidently the unpolluted outpouring of a pure spirit, looking to the Almighty for the fulfilling of those hopes and aspirations which prove the immortality of what dwells within us, that it is seldom sneered at even by the most profligate. The poor, who till the ground for their subsistence, look naturally and directly to the heavens, upon the influence of which they consider depend the results of their efforts. Thus they become, almost unconsciously, in direct communion with God himself—they call upon His

rain—they entreat His sunshine—their intercourse with nature leads them to supplicate its great Originator. Though mayhap they could not quote or apply the text,—they know by experience that "God giveth the increase."

"It would be curious to ascertain," said Mary to her lover, "which venerates his Maker most—the tiller of the land, or the fisher of the sea?"

"It must depend upon the disposition of the individual, I should think," replied Harry.

They commenced ascending the cliff: Mary and Mortimer lingering (as lovers always do) behind; Lady Ellen and Mr. Lister, alternately sparring and philosophising, in the advance,—though it must be confessed the lady generally had the conversation very much to herself.

"Why is Lady Ellen so severe?" whispered Mary, as they had nearly climbed to that pretty cottage which hangs, like a bird's nest from a bough, half-way down the chine.

"She is often so," replied her companion. "We, poor men, are forced to endure her

philippics against our faults; whilst she quite forgets that she herself possesses the faults she condemns in no moderate degree."

"I am sure her heart is right; she is too high-souled ever to yield to temptation from motives of mere interest."

"You only do her justice, Mary; she has a noble mind, though a bitter spirit."

"Say rather a bitter tongue," replied Mary. "I often think that Ellen assumes that bitterness to conceal some weakness which we know not of."

How strange it is that a young girl will often read the heart aright; when men, and worldly men too, are quite baffled as to its emotions! Women are quick-sighted as regards each other.

"Harry," said Mary, after a pause, "I cannot believe that all the interest in the world would ever make you swerve from that which your conscience would determine just."

"Thank you, sweetest, for the assurance," replied her lover, as he pressed her hand to his lips.

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"Besides, we shall—you will—have abundance, without seeking office or assistance even from a king. And Uncle Horace calls that the most enviable existence in the world."

"He is right, Mary; but I would not spend my life idly, dearest—an Englishman ought to guard the honours and liberties of his country as scrupulously as his own."

Mary looked into his face, and smiled and sighed.

"You do not doubt me, dear Mary?"

"Doubt you!" she repeated, "oh, Harry, no—you and doubt are two—far, far apart, as yonder stars that glitter in the north and in the south! I do not teaze you now with doubts, nor," she added, in a sweet, low voice—love's natural tone—"with coquetry; indeed, I was far more of a coquette in times long past than I am now—town breeding destroyed what Uncle Horace said would be confirmed!"

"Uncle Horace is not infallible, then!" said Mortimer.

"I am not sure about that!" replied Mary; "I was fore-armed, as well as fore-warned;

perhaps I am not sure about that either—but perhaps I smarted—no, no, no, I meant not that; but I intended to say, that perhaps I saw I might have suffered from it if I had lost a true-love, and married one of those counterfeits who hunt a heiress as they would a hare!"

"My beloved Mary!" exclaimed her knight, "how truly am I to be envied! what I suffered, a thousand times repaid!—the only one I ever loved, to know her thus my own—to find her grow in wisdom and in beauty—to know that she has that within which will increase in excellence with years! Oh, Mary! my heart is filled to overflowing with the richest happiness. I often ask why it is that blessings and prosperity thus shower on one who has so little claim on Fortune for such favours."

"Say on Providence, not Fortune," said Mary. "Providence is ever careful of its creatures; Fortune as heedless of her favours as she is stupid in her distribution of them."

"Why, what a moralizer I shall have! You will look sharply at my words and motives, Mary."

"Not *sharply,* Harry. A sharp woman!—a rose-branch without blossom, yet clothed in thorns!"

Lady Ellen stopped abruptly as they gained the top of the chine pathway, and asked Harry if he had heard lately from Philip Marsden. He told her he had, and that he talked of coming to the island to finish Mary's bust.

Again the lovers whispered, and followed their conductors to the gates of Norley Lodge. Lady Ellen pressed Mary to enter with them; but no, Mary must go home to her mother—she had been away nearly all day—her mother might think herself neglected, might feel hurt—she must read or sing to her before bed-time—it was but some five yards farther, so she would say good-night.

"Good-night, fair heart," said Lady Ellen, in playful allusion to their conversation on the beach. "Good-night, fair heart; you will not quarrel with your friend for thinking you better than others."

Mary and Harry Mortimer walked together in that lovely moonlight across the field which

divided their two dwellings—the rich berries of the hawthorn trembled in the rising breeze, and the trees, laden with the ripe fruits of autumn, formed the most fantastic arches above their heads. At last (how rapidly had the moments flown), his hand lifted the latch of the wicket-gate,—and they were beneath a long veranda leading to the cottage entrance. At that entrance stood Mrs. Lorton in conversation with a gentleman—a stranger—at least neither Mary nor Harry remembered having ever seen him.

As they approached, he lifted his hat to Mrs. Lorton; but, instead of proceeding down the usual path, so as to meet Mortimer and Mary, he crossed the lawn in front, and vaulted over the fence that encircled the grounds.

Mrs. Lorton rushed to her own chamber; and Mary heard the key turn in the lock from within, just as she reached the door.

CHAPTER IV.

So lived, so loved they. Their life lay enshrined
Within themselves and people. They reck'd not
How the world sped around them, nor divined:
Heaven, and their home endearments fill'd their lot.

M. Howitt.

"It's a fine morning, Miss Magdalene, and you look as bright as a steel bodkin in the sunshine," said Peter Pike to Magdalene Marsden. "I have been to Ryde already, and have brought you some flowers."

"I thank you, Peter; just what I wanted," replied Magdalene. "Very pretty flowers,—and very sweet too, considering the season of the year."

"I am glad you like them," quoth Peter; "I should wish to give you nothing that was not sweet, at any season."

Magdalene untwisted the bast that had

been twined round the flower stems, and could hardly help smiling at Peter's compliment—although Peter was such a general lover, that he was laughed at even by the pretty puritans who had won him his master's reproof on the morning of his departure.

"We have a hard duty, Miss Magdalene," again commenced Peter, "seeing that you and I have the responsibility of the care of Miss Mary until Mr. Horace comes back. She was always an angel; but I'm glad, for one, that master did not leave her mother under my care—Eh! Miss Magdalene?"

"Mr. Brown, replied Magdalene, "left you, I know, Peter, to *attend* upon Mrs. and Miss Lorton." (She laid more stress on the word *attend* than Peter liked, though he did not say so.) "And I am sure," she added, "he might well count upon your fidelity;—you bring them flowers, anticipating their least desire!"

"The flowers were for *you*, Miss Magdalene," interrupted Peter, looking very sentimental.

"Thank you, Peter; but there are more

here than I require for Mrs. Lorton's vase, so you can give these, and these, to Susan, or Jane, or Letty."

"Miss Magdalene," interrupted Peter, "it's little I'd think of Susan, Jane, or Letty, if some one I know of would think of me."

"Poor Peter!" ejaculated Magdalene:—"Well, if you are so very constant to the fair girl at Liverpool Miss Mary told me of, and as you say you write so badly, that only Mr. Horace Brown can read what you put down, why, I will write a letter for you when you please!"

At first, Peter looked confounded; he was sorely puzzled to know whether Magdalene either did not, or would not, understand him; but he rallied quickly, and thanking her, replied, "that he would ask her to write for him that evening." Then, suddenly remembering his charge, he inquired if she had seen any strangers, or a stranger, about the cottage, or in the immediate neighbourhood, lately?

Magdalene said she had seen many; but none who particularly attracted her attention.

All the latter part of the evening, she added, she had been engaged with Miss Lorton, who had suffered much anxiety from her mother having shut herself closely into her room, refusing to admit either one or the other during the night; but that she had permitted her daughter to breakfast with her, and they were now together in the small pavilion, so thickly enclosed by the evergreens, that though it had been evidently built to command a view, it was impossible to catch a glimpse of the ocean from it.

Magdalene stood no farther parley with Peter, whose "infirmity" of falling in love, instead of diminishing with greyish years, appeared to increase as he grew old; and had it not been for his uncompromising fidelity, he would have been unbearable to his employer.

Magdalene filled a vase with the flowers, and took it to the pavilion she had spoken of. It was a small building containing two rooms, both opening on a lawn hedged with evergreens. Mrs. Lorton was reclining on a sofa,

looking more lovely than usual, for her cheek was flushed, and her eyes bright, either from excitement or fever. Mary was sitting by her side, her hands clasped on the top of her guitar, and Magdalene thought she had been weeping. She left the vase on the table, and withdrew.

Considering the dear and affectionate terms on which Mary and her mother had lived together for many years, it may seem strange that, though the question trembled on her lips, Mary had not the courage to ask her mother, *who* she had seen at the door the preceding evening. She felt assured that he was in some degree connected with the increased abstraction which Mrs. Lorton had evinced; and though she thought of nothing else, she could not give the thought utterance, but endeavoured to amuse her mother by talking of indifferent matters. Mrs. Lorton had taken a rose from the vase, and was silently admiring its beauty, when Mary told her that she had heard the night before, at Lady Norley's, of the approaching wedding of a lady whose cha-

racter had been a good deal "talked" upon during the past season. Mary had discredited, and, as far as a young girl dare do so, had discountenanced the reports; and now rejoiced at her prospects.

"Still, my dear child," said Mrs. Lorton, "when you are married, I would recommend you not to visit her. It is not enough that a female *is* pure, she must *appear* so; she must be above suspicion."

"We can all," replied Mary, "be above suspicion as regards our own conduct; but how can we guard against the falsehoods of the wicked?"

"My dearest girl talks like a child who knows nothing of the construction a wicked world puts on our simplest actions. You know that, however fashion might regard individuals, I not only avoided those upon whom scandal breathed, but those upon whom it was likely to breathe."

"Then, my dearest mother," replied Mary, who had been from childhood upwards the most charitable of God's creatures, and was

never severed from her gentleness but by a harsh judgment expressed towards her fellow-creatures,—"You have not done unto others as you would wish to be done unto!"

The rose Mrs. Lorton was about to replace within the vase fell from her hand, and a singular and sudden change passed over her countenance, as, turning quickly on her daughter with that rapid transition from kindly to severe, which Mary declared was a portion of her mental disease, she exclaimed,

"And who told you that your mother ever stood in need of charity?"

"Mother," replied Mary, meekly—"mother, we may not need the dole of cummin or of anise,—but we do need the gentle feelings of our friends to overlook our faults."

"You have not answered me, girl," said Mrs. Lorton, rising from the couch; "take care, Mary; take care;—the time may be approaching, when you may wish to cast your mother from your heart; ay, and trample on her, as I trample on this rose." She placed her foot upon the tender petals of the flower,

and Mary saw it crushed beneath her tread; her heart trembled at the bitter and unjust sarcasm her mother had cast upon her, and as the guitar fell from her hands, she left her seat and walked into the inner room, without uttering one word of reply to the cruel taunt—"that the time might be approaching when she might wish to cast her mother from her heart."

As she passed the open window, the shadow of a man in the act of crossing from one clump of trees to the other, in the bower-like enclosure, attracted her attention. As it glided over the smooth lawn, she thought she heard a low, suppressed, muttering laugh; she was not certain; she paused—listened—listened so attentively, notwithstanding the agitation of the past scene, that she suppressed her breathing—every faculty appeared absorbed in the one; she was all ear;—there was no repetition of the sound—all was still, perfectly still, except, indeed, that the breeze shook many leaves from the quivering aspen, and that some wild bird from the depths of one of the deepest

valleys, sent up its full and joyous notes, filling the air with music. She paused for a moment: doubtless it was the gardener, who had crossed the sunbeams; yet her young heart beat audibly against her bosom. She could see through the glass-door that her mother's features were almost convulsed by an emotion for which she could not account. She passed to a window which opened on what might be called the *back* of the pavilion. She unclosed it; the sea-breeze chafed her fevered temples, and she rested her forehead against the casement. In a few moments she saw Harry appear on the cliff which terminated the garden, and in another he was by her side. After the half-murmured, half-silent greeting, which is love's sweetest salutation, she inquired why he had lingered in the garden, and crossed from the front to the cliffs before he entered? He assured her he had climbed the cliffs but that minute, and had not been to the front of the pavilion at all.

She told him she had seen a shadow! and he laughed, and asked her if she had been

fairy-struck, as fairies so abounded in the island. At this she only smiled; but when he would have gone to pay his respects to her mother, she prevented him.

"Do not go, Harry, do not go in. My mother is not well to-day; but if we leave her to herself, she will be better soon."

"Not well to-day, dear Mary; not well to-day—and she was so much better yesterday?"

"So she was," replied poor Mary; "but she changes every hour. I had almost said I was sick of hope. I did not mean, God knows, to anger her."

"*You* anger her!—*You*, the most tender and devoted child on earth!—How was it? Nay, tell me, sweet one." And the lover urged how from him there should be no mental reservation, as truth and love are one, or ought to be so; and then Mary repeated what Mrs. Lorton had said,—"That the time might be approaching when she might wish to cast her mother off:" and the gentle girl could not recall the words without many tears; which however, were dried as soon as shed. They

walked arm in arm, in all the full confidence of mutual affection, beneath the shadow of a laurel-hedge, which was sufficiently extensive to shade a gravel-walk, and *just* wide enough for two—two lovers I mean, who (I don't know how it is) usually walk much more closely together than strangers!

"Mary," inquired Harry in a tone of such deep interest that the fair maid was more than usually attentive—"Mary, have you ever seen or known any of your mother's relations?"

"She has none, none that I ever heard of. She was the only child of refugee parents—Swiss or German—and they are all dead."

"But she may have *some* distant connexions—I think your Uncle Horace suspected this; nay, I am sure he did."

"I have thought as much myself: and yet, if so, why should she conceal it?" inquired Mary.

"Perhaps they are poor!"

"Well," replied Mary, "we could make them rich; and if we could not, poverty is no disgrace!"

"Perhaps something not pleasant might attach itself to them!"

Mary coloured deeply. "Did you mean," she said, "it was possible that anything disgraceful *could* attach itself to my mother's relatives?"

"Mary, we cannot answer for the conduct of our connexions."

"It would be impossible!" exclaimed Mary, warmly, "that any related to my mother could be other than fair and honourable. Oh, Harry, you and Uncle Horace never did her justice. Upon *one point,* I will confess, she has been weak, very weak; but remember her temptations. My mother was most beautiful, with a refined and *foreign* taste—*foreign,* that was dear Uncle Horace's great stumbling-block. He could not bear her foreign feelings; he called them, what he thought them, affectations. She had no friends, no companions suited to those feelings in the country. She did not wish me wedded to what she heartily dislikes—a trader,—and she strained every nerve, expended all her influence, to live in

London. My father was ambitious, as you well know; quite as ambitious as my mother. How both were disappointed in the ideas they formed, matters not now; but, Harry, not even when most anxious to make her way amongst the great, did she descend to mix with any of tainted purity—Oh, no! nothing connected *with her* could be impure."

"'Tis a fond girl's argument—wide, wide apart from reason and philosophy!" said Harry; "but we will not pursue it farther, though I cannot but believe that stranger, who would not meet us on the lawn last night, was some relation."

"I grant," replied Mary, "that I too am perplexed; but it does not cause *you* trouble, Harry, does it?" she inquired affectionately.

"Me, Mary! dearest, not a jot! why should it? save, that it grieves me your dear mother should suffer from anxiety. I know that her mind must be distempered by some affairs, which as yet are mysteries to us; but we must leave all to time."

"To God! rather," said Mary.

"Ay, to God, indeed!" repeated her lover; "and, Mary, do not look reproachfully at me because I said *time*;—trust me, dearest, I venerate *His* power, and rely upon His goodness, almost as much as you; perhaps I think less of it than you. A dove crouches in the sunbeams, and blesses their warmth, more than the eagle."

"There is a little bit of saucy foppery in that comparison," said Mary, "which I would chide you for, but that your simile is defective, and that is sufficient punishment; for an eagle seeks the sunbeam, and glories both in its light and in its warmth: the dove shrinks from the light, but the benevolent warmth of the great luminary is the soul of her existence!"

"You have increased my foppery a thousand-fold," replied Harry.

"Let us seek my mother now," said Mary, blushing.

"Ay, I am sure her mood has passed away by this;—though she once frowned upon my love, yet I love her for your sweet sake!" observed the lover tenderly.

"And for her own;—nay, Harry, for her own!" she exclaimed, with affectionate warmth.

"Yes, Mary, there is much about your mother both to admire and to love. Lady Norley was saying the other morning, that she never knew a beautiful woman gaining high society, wedded to a husband, who (though I know he dearly loved her) was so palpably careless as to what society she frequented, conduct herself with so much dignified propriety; it was the observation of all her friends; of those, too, who were jealous of the admiration she, and her daughter, my own Mary, both excited."

Mary pressed the arm on which she leaned, close, and closer still, and looked into Harry's face, with that tender and thankful expression which every man in the world most exceedingly admires, because the first tells of affection, the second of dependence; he gladly continued a theme which had afforded her so much delight.

"Even in London, I have known the greatest traitor to all female virtues, speak of her

with respect. I am most grateful to her for this womanly celebrity; for if there is anything in the world I should be jealous of, it would be the fair—but, no, the word fair does not half express the anxiety I should feel, that my wife's fame should be like the spotless lily, so spotless, that the sun's rays at noon could find no trace of stain, or flaw, or blemish;—and a daughter's virtues depend so much upon her mother's training, that I should be almost as jealous of the one as of the other. Indeed, Mary, I thank her from my soul for this—the truest fame that ever woman earned! I should fear (now do not look as if I *did* fear, I only said I *should* fear), supposing your mother drawn into fashionable life, as she was, by her ambition, — supposing she *had* ridden, and driven, and laughed, and flirted, as many women do, during the passing of the summer solstice,—why then I should fear that the gayness of my Mary's manners was not——" He paused.

"Was not what, Harry ——"

"Why, not, perhaps, exactly what I should desire."

"What! are you jealous?" inquired Mary, laughing; then added, more seriously, "I might, perhaps, at one time have been too careless, or too gay,—everything was new to me, so very new, that my heart overflowed with joy, and trustfulness, and hope; yet the fulfilment of my every wish followed its creation at so quick a pace, I had no time for hope. My father's death, my mother's fitful moods, and a certain suspicion (which my dear uncle's care and kindness prevents from being anything but suspicion) that we are more indebted to the generosity of Horace Brown than to what property my father left, for all our present luxuries, makes me more thoughtful than I ever thought I should be. If Maxy were here she would call me a mope."

"That woman was a viper!—all viperous thoughts go with her," said Harry, bitterly; then added, "your uncle never suffered me to inquire into the state of your father's affairs, but he succeeded in convincing Lord Norley that my sweet bride would be more richly dowered than even his lordship *hoped* for; and that is saying much. Forgive me, if what I

said was even tainted by jealousy, my Mary. Henceforth, be gay or grave, or in whatever mood you please; and let the humour be what-e'er it will, I'll like it best!" He spoke with so much enthusiasm, that Mary could not avoid thinking, that those most dear to her were wildly affectionate. There was more warmth in Harry's words than was his wont; his mind was always calm, and clear, and *tenderly* quiet; organized and regulated better than the minds of handsome men are found in general to be.

As she scanned, through the deep fringes of her beautiful eyes, his manly and noble features, she felt that in him were united the ardour of the lover, with the firmness and wise-thinking of the friend. It was upon her lips to tell him so, but her resolution failed. Harry was so particular, he might think it unmaidenly, so her thoughts escaped with a sigh —one of those drawn of full happiness—not of discontent or sorrow.

"What is it, dearest?" whispered Harry, for lovers' ears are quick at catching sighs.

"Nothing," said the maiden.

"I know by that sweet blush, Mary, that something passed through your mind—not sorrowful—Oh, no!—What was it, love?"

"It was," she replied, turning away her face, and shaking her rich curls so as to shroud the blushes on her cheek and brow; "it was only, that I think your friendship of as much—no, *almost* of as much value as your love!"

"And you sighed at this?"

"No, Harry, no; I thought (you know how quick thought is!) that with my mother I feel always an anxiety, an undefined restlessness, a dread of I know not what. I watch her, and think of her loveliness, and pray it may not fade; and then there is something wild and mysterious about her, that fevers and excites my imagination. With Uncle Horace, whom I love so very dearly, I am—is it not strange?—much more at ease than with my mother; but then he is so odd, so sarcastic—to be at ease with him, would be like sleeping on the edge of a volcano. I love, esteem, respect dear Uncle Horace, but am—now do not laugh—the least, no, perhaps more than a little bit afraid of him!—but with you, all is repose, and

joy, and hope! — your very shadow tells of so much peace, so much protection, that I could sleep beneath it!"

This simple, but earnest confession, was made in so whispering and trembling a tone, was so different from the often gay, bounding, spirited Mary, that Mortimer could hardly believe it was indeed his betrothed who spoke. He folded her to his bosom; but, ere he could imprint a kiss upon her cheek, a loud, piercing shriek from the pavilion rang upon their ears!

CHAPTER V.

So lived, so loved they. But as in the calm
Of a hot noon, a sudden gust will wake;
Anon clouds throng; then fiercer squalls alarm;
Then thunder, flashing gleams, and the wild break
Of wind and deluge:—till the living quake,
Towers rock, woods crash amid the tempest,—so
In their reposing calm of gladness spake
A word of fear!

M. Howitt.

When Mortimer and Mary rushed into the Pavilion, Mrs. Lorton was standing near the spot where her daughter had left her—pale and rigid as marble, her eyes fixed on the countenance of a tall, thin man, whose prominent features and black curling hair rendered him, if not handsome, of striking and picturesque appearance; his figure was, or rather had been, enveloped in a blue boat cloak that lay upon the ground; his dress was a mingling of English and foreign costume, the richly-embroidered waistcoat and trowsers belonging to the latter, while the tight-fitting jacket and

black silk kerchief tied carelessly round his throat claimed affinity with that class of gentlemen who are said to spend much time on board their yachts. He had grasped Mrs. Lorton's arm with his right hand, and stood opposite to her: for a minute neither appeared to notice the entrance of Mary and Mortimer, and they heard the stranger say,—"Why did you scream? are you, indeed, mad?" The instant his eye rested on them he regained his self-possession; and, relinquishing his grasp, turned to the youthful pair, and bowing with perfect ease and grace of manner, said, before Harry's over-boiling feelings had time to vent themselves in words,—"Mrs. Lorton has been so much astonished at the re-appearance of an old friend this morning, whom she saw only last night, that she has forgotten to greet him. She will, however, remember me presently."

Mary had flown to her mother, who continued standing, apparently unconscious of anything except the presence of her visitor, upon whom her eyes were still fixed: at length, feeling that the pressure of his hand

was removed from her wrist, she pushed up the sleeve, and rubbing the place he had grasped, turned suddenly to her daughter, and in a deep low whisper, murmured, "Is it black?—is it black?—is it black?"

"No, dearest mother, no—why should it be?" replied the trembling girl.

"He touched it—whatever he touches turns black—whisper—closer—nay, closer still—he touched my heart once when I was young, and *that* turned black, although you cannot see it; fair without, and foul within—but my heart has been black ever since—ay, black as hell!"

"Mother, dearest mother, recollect yourself, and do not wander thus—you know not what you say—your tongue repeats your dreams! Look at me; I am Mary, your own Mary. Ah, that was one of those dear smiles you love to give your child! Come hither, Harry. Here, mother, is your other child—your son—there—look upon us both! Thank God! thank God!" she continued, addressing Mortimer, "she is better now. Ring for some wine."

As Harry walked towards the bell, the stranger moved to where he had stood at Mrs. Lorton's side: her head had sunk upon her daughter's shoulder, and tears were flowing from her eyes—she extended her hand, as she thought, to Harry, and the stranger took it within his—although she did not see him, did not even glance towards him, there seemed an electrifying power in his touch that almost convulsed her frame; it was but the touch of a moment, yet the shriek that followed was more appalling than the first. Mary encircled her mother with her arms, and Harry confronting the stranger, exclaimed, "There is evidently something in your presence, Sir, which disturbs Mrs. Lorton. I must request that you withdraw. Nay, Sir," he continued, replying to a look and gesture by which the intruder intimated his intention to remain—"nay, Sir, it is unmanly—you cannot but have heard of Mrs. Lorton's illness—you see her daughter's agitation—you cannot intend remaining!—if you will not go," persisted Mortimer, after a pause, "I must forget you

have said that you were Mrs. Lorton's friend, and force you hence."

The intruder glanced at the muscular proportions of his own stalwart frame, then looked at Harry, and without attempting to move, smiled, with what might almost be called a species of good-natured contempt.

"Have you heard what I said, Sir?" interrogated the young man.

"Perfectly."

"Then, Sir, I command you to withdraw."

"Indeed, indeed!" exclaimed the intruder, and a deep red spot glowed upon either cheek. "And pray, who are you, that command me to leave the house of Margaret Lorton? Look, young Sir,—I did not come here to create disturbance; if Mrs. Lorton desires me to go, I am gone—if she bids me stay!—answer me, Mrs. Lorton—Margaret Linden, answer me—do *you* desire *me* to be sent forth from your house by the rude command of a boy like this?"

When the stranger commenced speaking, his words evidently fell unheeded on Mrs.

Lorton's ear; but when he continued, and named her childhood's name, she started, disengaged herself from her daughter's arms, and stood erect—fixing her eyes, as by a spell, upon the stranger.

"Margaret Linden," she repeated; "there is one come from the dead to call upon a name long dead! Margaret Linden!—there is music in that simple name. Mary, you sing a song called 'Linden Grove;' is it not musical?"

"You see, Sir," said poor Mary, "you see how my dear mother wanders—she is not herself—let me entreat you to retire—some other time—any time but now!"

"I should be delighted to oblige Miss Lorton; but, before I go, I must be told to do so by your mother herself. Nay, Sir, the first time I had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Lorton, after a separation of many years, was at the house of Lord Norley." He handed Mortimer a card. "Last night I called upon her here, and promised to return. Before I go, she must fix a time for me to visit her again;

I must see and converse with her privately—it is for her interest that I do so."

Mrs. Lorton appeared gradually recovering her presence of mind; then, by a great and sudden effort, she recalled, as it were, her wandering thoughts, and addressed her daughter with a calmness which, considering her previous excitement, was truly wonderful. "I have to apologize," she said; "I have been, as my dear Mary knows, in a state of most depressing nervousness the entire morning—at such times I am not mistress of either my thoughts or words. Harry, I pray you pardon me—I am forgiven by my child before I ask it. This is Count—Count,"—she passed her hand across her forehead, as if trying to remember,—"Count D'Oraine; a person ——"

"A friend, lady—why not say a friend!—why not say a friend at once," he continued, without apologizing for the rudeness of his interruption. "I knew your mother when she was a child," he continued, turning to Mary; "knew her before she was a rich man's bride—her fortunes fixed her quietly in Eng-

land; mine took me far away. And, in truth, I am much grieved to see the lovely associate of my young days shaken by such strange mental troubles. See, that's her old smile!—now will you not bid me welcome!"

"Is this so, mother?" inquired Mary, in a whisper; for though Mrs. Lorton had smiled, it was anything but a smile of approbation. "Do not vex her now, she is but now recovering—indeed, Sir, in such moods, we leave her quite to herself."

"Will you not acknowledge me?" he said, addressing Mrs. Lorton.

Her eyes wandered, and she seemed relapsing into her former state—then rallied—and then again shrunk into herself at the sound of his voice as he repeated the question.

"Miss Lorton," he resumed, after a pause, "I will not press this matter farther, now; to-morrow, at the time of noon, I will await your mother here—to-morrow, then, at noon."

He bowed respectfully to Mary and her mother, and saluting Harry with careless, yet

haughty familiarity, quitted the pavilion by the open window.

Harry was bewildered—he knew not what to say, nor what to do—had any other man presumed to speak or act as he had spoken and acted, he would have punished him on the instant, or arranged a future meeting. At all events, he instantly resolved that he should not escape from him without some explanation; to effect this intent, he was following him to the garden, when Mary entreated him to remain. "Harry, I entreat, I command you stay! My mother, by-and-bye, will explain all! Seek not that fearful man—I entreat you not to follow."

"Is he gone, quite gone," muttered Mrs. Lorton. "Shut to the window; nay, bolt it, Harry—fast—fast. Yet why?—bolts will not keep him out—they never did. Mary, I am not well—I was ill, you know, this morning; was I not?—certainly I was—you must not imagine that the visit of an old friend *could* make me ill—it surprised me."

"Yet you have seen him before; and you saw him last night," said Harry.

"Why, so I did, Sir," she replied, with asperity. "Why, so I did—but what is that to you? I do suppose I *may* see whom I please in my own house. Mary, I did not mean to send the blood hot flushing to your cheek. Mortimer knows that I am over-hasty when not well. I will go to my bed-room, Mary. Call Magdalene. You, Harry, saw him"—she drew herself up, and her daughter felt her tremble violently.—"It was strange, was it *not* strange"—and her eyes fixed with a piercing expression upon him—"that I should feel so agitated at the sight of one I knew in childhood? But there are often voices and perfumes on the empty air—things that to common senses are as nought—but that to mine are fraught with memory—ay, Mary, memory of the past—I knew him in my girlhood, now long ago—he was a boy, almost a boy, then—he knew my parents, and he knew—but no matter now, it is all passed and gone save that it pains me *here*,"—she pressed her

hand upon her brow. "I knew the man long since—I should have introduced him to you—did I not?—a wild untoward man, yet one of talent—your geniuses are always wild—are they not, Harry?—a strange welcome did I give unto so old a friend—what said he, Mary?"

"That he would return at noon to-morrow," she replied.

"At noon to-morrow," repeated Mrs. Lorton.

"Yes; come to your room, dear mother—come now—at once."

"At noon to-morrow, and not to-night!" she said, musingly.

"No, surely not to-night—why should he come to-night?"

"What! do you intend to follow Mortimer's example—and question—suspect perhaps—and blame—is this your love, your duty!"

"I did but mean," replied the tearful Mary, almost worn down by the agitation of contending feelings, added to her mother's strangeness—"I did but mean to say that I was not

aware *why* he should come to-night—I did not ask him."

"Poor, silly child!" exclaimed Mrs. Lorton, pushing the clustering ringlets from her daughter's brow, "does the fierce whirlwind wait for invitation?"

"What mean you, my dear madam; surely he would not presume to intrude here without an invitation," said Mortimer, anxiously.

"What mean I?" she replied, in a subdued voice; "faith, boy, I know not! except that my head and heart both ache. I did but speak a folly—one of the thousand that pass through a woman's brain, and leaves behind it traces of love—mirth—desolation—I know not what! nor do I want to know—peace! what would I give for peace!—imagination (I read it in a book) is the spirit's empire. I have lived for nights, and nights, and nights, forgetting all but the brief world which I myself created. It is most strange what curious dreams swamp the realities of life. Well, I have given them up. When you are married, Mary, I shall found a convent for Pro-

testant ladies—that is, if I have enough to do so; for I feel, I don't know why, as if I had no money I could call my own, and was doomed to die in a workhouse!"

She would have continued talking in this wild incoherent way for a much longer time, had not Magdalene entered, and then Mary accompanied her to her chamber.

She was horrified to see that her mother poured some laudanum into a wine-glass, and drank it off, saying, "That will bring rest, when nothing else will!"

Magdalene left the room, and in a few minutes Mary knew that her mother slept—she was thankful at that time for repose, however procured. And as she sat by the bed-side, contemplating her beautiful features, her mind revolved, and re-revolved, the conflicting events of the past hour.

CHAPTER VI.

> Ill it becomes thee, with ungrateful sneer,
> The trade-fed town and townsmen to dispraise;
> Why rail at Traffic's wheels, and crowded ways?
>
> E. Elliott.

I once saw a young man (by the way he was an Irishman) enter the counting-house of a millionaire, to whom his maternal uncle had paid a large premium for the purpose of enabling the said youth to acquire a knowledge of business. I saw him enter the counting-house in the city of London; it was a long, narrow room; four windows were ranged on one side, but they were of little use, —for, without, they were shrouded by a thick, yellow, November fog, and I do not suppose the glass had been dusted, within, for at least three months, (a counting-house is no specimen of English cleanliness,)—the fog was so

intense that it had made its way into the room; and the different desks (before each of which sat either a clerk or an elder apprentice on a Brobdignag sort of square stool of the most odious and inconvenient shape possible) were each furnished with a long yellow candle, the flame of which gleamed with a red and unnatural lustre through the dim and sickly atmosphere. At the farthest end of this apartment a fire showed with pallid and lurid light beneath a high and projecting mantleshelf, which had been carved years upon years before into all manner of dragons and cherubs, that looked through the mist to the poor youth's eyes like spirits hovering over the burning and dread abyss of a nameless empire. He stood boiling with indignation and the blood of the O'Shanes, for nearly fifteen minutes; during which time a dozen heads, at the very lowest calculation, were immovably bent over long parchment-covered books with mottled reddish edges; murmurs, few and far between, of "invoice"—"sum-total"—"bills of lading"

—" Spanish bonds "—" bills of exchange "—" specie "—" cargo "—" per-centage "—broke upon his ears, but nobody noticed him; they treated him as " nobody,"—at which, as I said before, the indignation and the blood of the O'Shanes boiled, and boiled, until at last it boiled over; and with exceeding dignity, at which the clerk he addressed smiled, he inquired if the gentleman was within; the smiling clerk made no reply, but pointed with his pen towards a door " far away in the gloom," intimating that *there* he might find whom he sought. In this inner den, built up with papers, seated at a railed desk, but seated, unlike his clerks, in a chair, our hot-brained youth saw his future master, in the person of a small, white-headed man, who having merely asked his name, said, " You'll dine with me at five." He longed to prove his high blood, by refusing the invitation; but he looked on the old gentleman's white hairs, and remembered that his own father's were in the grave! he therefore contented himself with strutting out of the office—but his dignity was thrown away

upon the young men, and he passed out unobserved, for they were attending to their business: the first symptom he gave of attending to his, was by arriving punctually at five at the merchant's private house.

No two persons could be more opposite than the white-headed merchant of the counting-house in Basinghall Street and the millionaire of Bedford Square: the youth could hardly believe his senses—the merchant at business was terse, cold, exact; the merchant at home might have been the envied of princes—so magnificent were his arrangements—so benevolent—so kindly were his manners.

"Had I not seen him at home," thought the youth, "I would never have been a merchant! I am now convinced that it is not impossible to be both a trader and a gentleman."

A year passed rapidly by; and one day the young man ventured to ask the merchant, "How it was that he managed so to distinguish between his hours of relaxation and his habits of business, and prevent the one interfering with the other."

"Simply," he replied, "by having a time for every thing, and every thing in time!"

None knew the practical benefit of this maxim better than Uncle Horace. His counting-house was much on the plan I have described; but his own "den" was more orderly, more neat, than merchant's "dens" are in general: this may be attributed to the fact of his being an old bachelor. He had once in his life entertained an idea of a new desk and an arm-chair for his own especial use; but when he mentioned his mind to his old and confidential clerk, the senior shook his head, and intimated that it might be considered as a "pattern-card for extravagance," and humbly recommended "Master Horace" to put up with the old one. Uncle Horace took his advice, and the old inky desk and the venerable chair, whose polished seat was fast wearing at the edges, may be in the same den, for aught I know to the contrary, at this present hour. There was a long brass peg projecting at one side of the high chimney-piece of this sanctum for Uncle Horace's hat, and

another at the other side for Uncle Horace's coat; and there was a funny brass crook in one corner where his brown silk umbrella always reposed, and a corresponding crook at the other where his ebony cane stood erect as its master,—the umbrella and the cane appearing to have separated by mutual consent! His observations as he passed through the counting-house, addressed first to one, then to another of his clerks, were, as was everything he did or said, in accordance with his eccentricities, his benevolence, and his uprightness.

"Mr. James, you know it is my desire that every coat hanging in the outward hall should have a loop inside the collar to hang by; your coats, Sir, prove that you do not attend to this direction—they all slit out, Sir—and they wear out sooner than they ought—you'll never be worth a pound, Sir, unless you think how you can save a penny!"

"Mr. Dempey, I thought I told you last night not to come to-day."

"Yes, Sir, you were very kind, but I knew

you wished a particular stock transferred; and my wife, thank God, is better!"

"Plague on it, what business has a clerk in a merchant's office to take a wife; it is a direct hint to the principal that he wishes for a partnership. I shall take the hint, Mr. Dempey, and that soon—there, no thanks, go home and tell your wife you will soon have partners, as well as a partner; and tell her, too, that Horace Brown is never so proud as when he can raise a man to a worldly level with himself, whose mental superiority he has long acknowledged."

Horace never would receive thanks—and so Christopher Dempey was obliged to rush from the office to conceal feelings which were gushing from his eyes. Horace stood over the desk from which this favoured clerk had risen; and then, after a pause, turned round and said, "Gentlemen, there are some of you new to the duties of a merchant's office, and to such I can only recommend the example of the young man who is from this day a junior partner in my house. Christopher Dempey,

though the son of a gentleman, never refused to carry out either sample or parcel—Christopher never broke an appointment—Christopher was ever the first at his desk, and the last to leave it—a falsehood or an equivocation never found its way into Christopher's mind, and consequently never escaped his lips—Christopher had always a black loop" (a glance at unfortunate James) "inside the collar of his great coat, and for fifteen years that coat always hung on the same peg: you may smile, gentlemen, but the fact proved an orderly mind, and order is the soul of commerce—I never found a blot in Christopher's ledger, —nor on his character. Gentlemen, have I not spoken truth?"

A buzz of approbation, whether real or affected, always followed such addresses; for they were invariably judicious; and if any, actuated by envy or ill-nature, had been discontented at the advancement of another, they had too much prudence to suffer it to appear. Horace Brown's "odd ways" were frequently commented on: yet so thoroughly

was his character appreciated, that it was considered an honour to obtain a seat in his counting-house. It was the universal opinion of the knights of the pen and wafer, in Manchester, Birmingham, and Liverpool, for in all these places was Horace Brown well known, that their worthy master's oddities had increased when he returned from the Isle of Wight. This, however, was a wrong conclusion; his oddities were as before; but during Peter Pike's absence he had no one at home upon whom to vent his ill-humour or sarcasms, so they had the full benefit of his displeasure at the office. His housekeeper and female servants always declared him "the sweetest-tempered gentleman in the world;" who was never in the way; and well they might, for he waged no war of words with women; indeed, he dreaded their eloquence, and seldom scrupled to confide as much to Peter. His old coachman did get a scolding now and then; but he was not, like poor Peter, ever at hand when wanted, so that he escaped marvellously considering all things.

With one exception, the principal clerk (the

one who could not admit the necessity for a new desk), none were aware that Horace Brown had lately withdrawn considerable sums from business, and had *not* invested them in any speculation. This was a trouble to the old man, who often murmured to himself that he feared something must be the matter with Mr. Horace's head, or he would not let money lie idle. Our uncle allowed him to form whatever opinion he pleased; he was never fond of explaining his motives.

Liverpool, like every trading town in England, has its *millionaires,* who treat each other to dinners, feasts rather, where magnificence, as to the solid money's worth exhibited on the palace-boards, would spread the palor of envy over the cheeks of many, whose hearts have panted for distinction in the streets, as the advertisements have it, "Leading off," May Fair. The greatest possible difference is evident in the habits of London and provincial living—the style of the former being either magnificent or elegant—of the latter, either gorgeous, or gross from its abundance.

Uncle Horace having "assisted" at one which belonged to the class gorgeous, was rather late at his office next morning, where, strange as it may seem, it was one of his peculiarities always to be about twenty minutes before the arrival of the London mails. On this particular morning, however, he was nearly thirty minutes beyond his time, and his letters were on his desk. He turned them over as they came—"Oh, from Bewick and Baldirstone—this from Glasgow.—These from the Admiralty, respecting the naval tender—these from Paris; I'll clap on twenty per cent. to those French dogs just to get rid of their custom. Very strange! no letter from Mary. Oh, from Cornhill! Oh, Howell and James—Howell and James!—what *can* they want with me?—I'm sure Mary used to bother and buy bonnets there—Imitation silver!—Oh! general trade, I suppose. No letter from Harry! —must send him a pen-knife. Ah! this sealed with a thimble! from Peter Pike, I am sure;—and this—why this is from Mrs. Brown Lorton—Margaret Brown Lorton. What can

she have to write about, I wonder; *years* have passed since she has so honoured me." The business letters for once remained unread, and Uncle Horace set himself about the difficult task of deciphering Peter's hieroglyphics. Strange! that Peter, who never could manage to pen a letter to his sweetheart, could, nevertheless, scrawl to his master.

"HONOURED SIR AND MEASTER,

"I HOP your helt is well, and the pils right acorden to recept. I am paind just now, and uncomfortable on acont of Miss Magdalane, thinkin to git her to put this down; but she is too busie, tho' she mite if she liket. I can't understan it at all, on acont of the seanoise, witch hinderd me earing wat I wantd; —but HE's here, theres no doubt o' that, and Miss Mary sterikhal, and the *Misses* odder than ever, and Mr. Harry odd too; and I saw Miss Mary and him this mornin, when the tide was on the turn, turn back to back, an walk up two pats up the clif, distant like, and the tears down her chicks, and the fire in his eyes —

and He comes open to the hous, and I saw him through the door, look as I didn't loike at Miss Mary. Ah, measter, the ould drake still finds out the worm in the mud! I hope I was astray, yot I wasn't so to say I wish you was here. He comes and goes, no one know how; and missis not at all satisfyed about money, and say she will write to you. Lady Ellen lookit yesterday as if she had summut to say; but she is too hoigh in herself to ax a queston. There's nothin to say wrong, and yet all's wrong; as bad as say-sickness, witch, if it wasn't for your honored sake, Sir, and Miss Mary's gardunship, and Mr. Harry, I'd 'counter like a Briton to get hom agin. I hop, honored Sir, you'll write by return of post, and tell me what to do, under thos difficult circumstances which I have so fuly explainet, for I am at a los; and your honor 'ill be pleast to mak an easy mind about the gals, as we discorced of on Ryde peer. I'm sure theyre little hippacriks—but it's no use thinking of wemens just now. I wouldn't distres you, honored Sir, only—God knows how 'til all finish. I think

Mr. Harry was a sharp on Miss Mary. I can't a-bear to see a lady cry, in witch I'm like yer honor. And am, Sir,

"Your honor's faitful servant to command,

"PETER PIKE.

"*Near Shanklin, Isle of Wite.*

"P.S. I beg my compliments to Mrs. Hanny —I hope her tongue's bin quite lately.

"N.B. Tell me if I ought to kipe pistols loaded. I wish I coud have the power to mak him not com. I'm sure it's on Mr. Harry's mind he's a lover of Missus, but I say no."

It is not at all necessary to recapitulate the exclamations and bitter thoughts which occurred to Uncle Horace, as he read what Peter considered an explanatory and satisfactory letter;—it had the effect of irritating, without enlightening, the person for whose perusal it was intended;—nor did the following epistle from his sister-in-law throw oil upon the troubled waters. We shall give this with Horace Brown's running commentaries thereon.

"My dear Brother,"—Dear *brother!—Oh*—

"You well know that since my dear husband's death I have been unable to attend to business of any description; but having *immediate* necessity for the small sum of 250*l.*, I wrote to our bankers"—*the Devil you did!*—"expecting that, as usual, my request would be attended to (you not having left either Mary or me a cheque-book)."—*Why should I?*—"What was my astonishment at receiving an answer, stating they had no money of mine, or Mary's"—*So she must get hold of Mary's if she could*—"in their hands! You will at once see that I am obliged to apply to you for an explanation of this. I *know* that we were involved, for I am sure I found it almost impossible to get a guinea latterly;"—*Well you might!*—"but I must request you immediately to inform me where the residue is deposited; it cannot be pleasant for me to come, even to a brother, for every trifle."—*She calls two hundred and fifty pounds a trifle!*—"And though I am deeply grateful for your generosity to my dear girl, yet I must request that

you will, by return of post, favour me with the information as to where I am to look for the sum I require immediately. And I have further to request, that the portion of my jointure now due,"—*Her jointure!—God help the woman!*—" be forwarded to Hartfield, Hoare, and Company."—*Oh, she's gone mad—perfectly mad—that's certain!*—" And when it suits your convenience, perhaps you will forward me a statement of my affairs. In matters of business relationship should be forgotten."—*Should it!—Faith, madam, I believe you 're right; but you 're a fool to say so.*—" I am getting better now, and find it an imperative duty to attend to my own affairs!"

"By Heaven!" exclaimed Horace Brown, dashing down the letter. "By Vulcan! she has been put up to this! She never composed this precious piece of penmanship herself—that last sentence proves it, if nothing else did. 'I am getting better now.' Margaret Brown never wrote that simply so—no, to do her justice, she would have said 'THANK

God, I am getting better now.' She never *lost that* feeling amid all her folly. There's some infernal plot in all this;—but I'll fathom it—that I will! And Mary!—if I thought Mary had seen that letter, I'd cut her off with a single shilling—to call *me* to account, who have been strewing her path with roses—me! —Oh, these women! I have eschewed matrimony, that I might be a free man—free to go, without questioning—free to come, without reproaches at delay—free to speculate, without the dread of leaving a widow and fourteen children to curse my memory if I failed—free to adopt whom I pleased;—and whom has it pleased me to adopt? Why, that Mary—that little whining, cozening jade: but I do her injustice, *she* knew not of that letter—not she; she is all truth. But is not her precious mother as great a torment as a wife? She never thought of calling me *dear* brother, until she thought, poor fool! she had her own ends to answer; *dear*, indeed! Why, the remnant of *my* brother's fortune would not have found her a single snowy proclamation for

another husband, in which our English widows wrap their heads: no, not a weeper wherewith to rub her eyes, as if much sorrow made them sore. And the flummery estate! that, to please my Lord's fancy, my Lady Ellen (another woman!) persuaded me to keep. Why, what a coil of women!"

Uncle Horace paced his den in wrath; not after the fashion of a chafed lion, but like an angry bear; then rubbing his hands, he continued, "I bothered one!—that Maxwell, that Lurewell!—*she* gave the information—to be sure, I paid her for it; and all the information only led me to the knowledge that——by Heaven, I have it now! it *is* this D'Oraine who has urged on my sister-in-law. What are his motives?"

He sat down, leaned his elbows on his desk, and pressed his hands upon his brow. His old clerk peeped over the green curtain that shaded more than half the window looking into the counting-house, and continued gazing at him for full five minutes. At last the old gentleman turned away in silent astonishment,

and thought within himself, that he had never so seen his friend since the time he brought him intelligence that three of his ships, laden with palm-oil and gold-dust, had been wrecked off the coast of Africa; "and then," still continued his thoughts, "I know he grieved more after the men that perished, than for the cargoes!"

Again did Uncle Horace peruse Peter Pike's communication, again weigh and consider, and place and replace every word and sentence; an occupation which evidently increased his irritability. Again did he read his sister-in-law's letter. And again did *that* make him half frantic. Again were his invectives against women in general, and Mrs. Brown Lorton in particular, mingled with bitter words, not loud but deep. It would appear that at last he made up his mind to some particular mode of thought and action, for he rang a bell which always summoned the little white-headed clerk, by name Jones, to his presence.

"Mr. Jones, I must go up to London by to-night's mail."

"My Cot!" exclaimed the little Welshman; "it's impossible; you have been so long away, Sir. You have not attended to the twentieth part of your business since your return. No mortal man could. The parties from Truro have agreed to your own appointment, and come to-morrow at twelve about the bills of lading; then Dean and Dixon at one, to consult about casting the chains for the suspension-bridge, furnishing the other works, and I know not what beside,—the order will bring a clear profit of fifteen hundred or two thousand pounds within six months. Then, Sir, the African merchants touching the pans; their desire to have salt-pans of zinc, I believe, seeing that the natives have learnt to scrape the copper from the pans they now use, to mingle with the gold."

"Cunning dogs—cunning dogs!" repeated Uncle Horace. "Yet, Mr. Jones, they do but follow our example; everything with us has its alloy,—honesty, its worldly wisdom,—truth, its expediency,—friendship, its carefulness,—morality, its necessities!"

"Eh, eh! you *are* always *so* clever, Sir," chuckled the shrewd old clerk. "Then, Sir, will you tell us what alloy has Love?"

"Upon my soul," said Uncle Horace, with great gravity, "I believe the universe is leagued against me! Why, Jones, such a question from you! *you*, man. I should as soon have expected it from Dian, the great yard-dog!"

"Poor thing!" said the sympathising Jones, "she had eleven pups this morning."

Uncle Horace frowned, and Mr. Jones shrank into a still smaller compass. "What other immediate business is there?" inquired the principal.

"I grow old," replied the little man; "will you permit me to refer to my memorandum-book?—but within my remembrance the house of Brown and Co. was never before so busy, or so prosperous. They are getting a proverb in Liverpool, and I heard a boy repeat it in Brummagem,—'As prosperous as Horace Brown.'"

Every one smiles at the idea of his own prosperity, and so did Uncle Horace.

"While you look over your mems., Mr. Jones," he said, "send one of the junior partners to me, Mr. Dempey, if he is in the house."

"Law, Sir, you forget; you gave him a sort of holiday, and I know he went over to Manchester to his mother's, with his wife, to get his little girl christened!"

"Three females!" grumbled the merchant; "then I may well he disappointed. I think," he added, aloud, "Mr. James will do as well for my purpose—tell Mr. James I want him." Little Jones fussed and fidgetted, for though he was an admirable man of business, he was desperately afraid of Uncle Horace, and he knew what he had to communicate would (to use his own phrase) "raise the wind."

"Is anything the matter with poor James?" inquired his kind-hearted master.

"No, Sir, nothing, except what can't be helped *now*," replied Jones; "but we all said you'd be very angry at it; and no wonder."

"I suppose," said our uncle, with forced composure—"I suppose he is going to be married!"

"Oh, Sir, it's all over—he *was* married yesterday—to the little French milliner at 26."

"Married to a French milliner!" repeated the merchant—"Abel James, the Quaker's son, married to that little flirting beflounced French bit of sticking-plaster! Now look you, Mr. Jones, *you* were aware of this; and, God knows, from having *twice* made a fool of yourself during your life-time, one would have imagined you might have watched over that misguided boy, and prevented his losing his situation."

"Lose his situation!" repeated Jones.

"To be sure, Sir: why you do not suppose I am going to keep a smuggler of contraband goods in my house! Though Mr. Dempey, as well as others, choose to make fools of themselves, why they put on the cap with a show of decency. Well, well; really, the world's doings are enough to make wise men mad! I shouldn't be surprised"—and he turned

one of his scrutinizing glances upon his clerk, who, despite his snowy hair, retained a bright eye, a cheek as if tinted by the ruddy autumnal apple, and a certain jaunty air, proceeding from his always treading on his toes; all of which occurred to Uncle Horace in a moment —while transfixing the poor little man by his glance he continued—"I shouldn't be surprised, Jones, if, in your dotage, you made a fool of yourself, for the third time!"

"Sir," replied the clerk, with more spirit than one would have given him credit for, "I have been in this counting-house two score years and ten. When you came *here*, you found me with the fixtures, and so I have remained;—if I am in my dotage, I am unable to perform my stipulated service, and had better, perhaps, go."

While the old man's cheek grew still more red, his voice faultered. Horace was at once conscious of the harshness of his words, and grasped his hand with a warmth of manner which great merchants seldom exhibit towards their clerks. "Thank you, Sir," replied Jones

to the pressure; "and, indeed, I've had it a long time upon my mind to tell you. I am in years now, and feeble, and it is lonely going home at night, where there is no female, except a servant, a hireling, to air one's coat, or make tea, or grill a devil, or see that things are comfortable;—and your housekeeper, Mrs. Hanny, is a sonsy, sensible woman, and her tongue would keep me alive."

"Jones, Jones!" exclaimed Uncle Horace, struggling in an agony of accumulated vexation. "Enough;—it is my fate; I must submit. Marry the great bell of St. Paul's if you please; I will make no opposition. I dare say I shall get resigned in time."

"Then, Sir, said the little grey man, very pointedly, "I shall meet with no opposition from you; because, you won't be angry, Sir, but the people of Liverpool *did* say——"

"What, Mr. Jones? Pray do not hesitate to tell me," said Uncle Horace, plumping himself down on his old chair, and beating a trombone sort of accompaniment to his ill humour

with the iron heel of his right boot;—" do not hesitate to tell me. After the disappointments and annoyances of this morning, I can bear anything."

" The people of Liverpool *did* say, that, perhaps, Mrs. Hanny *might* become Mrs. Brown."

" Upon my soul I am very much obliged to them," growled my hero.

" She's a personable woman, a fair sample," observed Jones; " a good pattern-card of the sex; but I have your authority to contradict it? '

" Augh-h-h." It is impossible to convey any idea of the sound by which the enraged merchant signified his assent.

" Well, Sir; I thought it was so, Sir; and can only wish you every happiness in your choice; and I only hope the London lady you have, I suppose, fixed on—(Job Harris wrote home all about it to Matty Clips, at the Magpie, four months ago)—a Miss Maxwell, he said,—may, in the evening of your days"——

Jones never finished the sentence—nor did he ever forget the words which followed his hint about the "evening of his days."

We love Uncle Horace too well to record every word he uttered when "in a thundering passion."

CHAPTER VII.

Maternal love, best type of heavenly bliss !
Thou show'st the joys of brighter worlds than this,
When sons and daughters rush to thy embrace,
And Love is painted on each rosy face !
E'en in the vale of poverty and gloom,
Thy joys, like heath-flowers on the moorland, bloom.

E. Elliott.

There were not a few connected with Brown and Company, who watched the out-going of the London mail from Liverpool with feelings of astonishment and curiosity, and considered the worthy man's departure a wonder, knowing that the excellent Horace was again about to visit the metropolis, from whence he had so recently returned: heads were seen above the green or wire half-blinds, as he passed to his destination, and his porters volunteered to

assist each other in carrying the valise and carpet-bag, which Peter Pike did not find too heavy to transport from the hotel to the termination of the pier at Ryde, without any help whatsoever. At last he was fairly "stowed in."

"Well," exclaimed Mr. Jones, as the mail rolled off, "*he is* a wonderful man! he has got through more business to-day, than all the other houses in Liverpool put together would get over in a week!"

Horace found himself seated opposite to a small delicate-looking woman, whose age might have been forty, perhaps not so much, for her's was one of those distinctly-marked countenances, the outline of which remains untouched for years: the only thought that occurred to our uncle was, "Bless me, what large black eyes she has!"

The gentleman next him rejoiced in a pair of those highly-cultivated abominations called mustachios, and Uncle Horace passed his hand more than once over his own lips and chin, to

make sure that he was himself shaved. Having ascertained the point entirely to his satisfaction, he glanced at his opposite neighbour; his glance was repeated; but he could not exactly make out what he was, except that he was *not* an Englishman. His hair was black and sleek, his eyes small, dark, and glittering, his nose hooked, and his complexion Moorish; he wore a richly-embroidered Greek cap, and his under-dress was concealed by the ample folds of a capacious cloak.

"Pleasant travelling companions I have got," thought the merchant; "this one to the right is, I suppose, a German; the one opposite, a Greek or Turk; and the other, Lord help us, is a woman!" Having thus thought, he folded himself up in silence, as in a garment, looking, as it must be confessed Englishmen generally do, at the commencement of a journey, exceedingly discontented.

The German, for so he really was, arranged his mustachios and went to sleep; his opposite neighbour, who was neither Turk nor

Greek, but an Armenian merchant, crossed his arms upon his bosom, and kept his brilliant and animated eyes constantly employed in scanning every object as the mail whirled on. Presently the lady loosened the folds of her cloak, and out popped the head of a singularly pretty dog, who, delighted at its emancipation, stretched out its little feathered paws upon her knees, and lifted up its head in gratitude to its mistress. The Armenian smiled, and Uncle Horace frowned; he set down his neighbour immediately as an old maid; it is a singular fact, that the antipathy evinced by old bachelors towards old maids, is as great as that which exists between hares and rabbits, cats and dogs, or any two things agreeing only in hatred of each other. Now, I can account for old maids' dislike to old bachelors, because they are regarded as enemies to the sex in general; but there is something exceedingly provoking and impertinent, in seeing an old bachelor, forsooth, turn up his nose at an old maid, and then turn about to flirt

with a young one: this ought not to be tolerated.

"J'espère, Monsieur," said the lady, addressing Uncle Horace in the sweetest voice that ever lent words melody: "J'espère que cette petite chienne—dis little dog does not frite you?"

"Oh, no, not at all," he replied, while at the same moment his thoughts reverted to his young clerk, and he murmured—"Heavens! *another* Frenchwoman!"

"Monsieur ne parle pas François?" resumed the lady after a pause.

"Not at all, Madam," replied Uncle Horace again.

"Quel dommage! What pity, Monsieur larn so quick!"

"No, Madam, I should not learn it quickly; I don't want to learn it."

The lady pulled her dog's ears, and murmured, "Bête!"

"And vy not, Sare?" inquired the Armenian in very imperfect English; "it is 'se

languash of 'se vorld; verever von goosh it is spoke!"

"Sir, I never go out of my own country."

"Ah!" replied his companion, "Vot vonder, ne-vere, ne-vere, out sis bit island, tis loike being tiet by se leg. I pity you, Sare!"

Horace bowed stiffly in reply to his pity;—the Armenian remained silent; but it is not easy to silence a Frenchwoman.

A Frenchwoman in the decline of life is one of the most delightful companions in the world. She retains a sufficient desire to please (the real source of coquetry) to the end of her days; and this desire prevents her from being either cross or stupid. She dresses well; that is to say, a woman of forty does *not*, in France, dress like a girl of fifteen; she takes care in the morning to arrange her blonde, so that the coming wrinkles may appear as but the shadow of the lace; her figure is well sustained, and, by the aid of a little rouge, and a little pencilling, her eyes, the only real beauty in a French face, look brilliant, and, what is better still, good-natured to the last.

Our women in England, at forty, or thereabouts, if they decline to act "Miss in her teens," take to long whist and heavy dinners. We cut short half our days by this arrangement, and mistake stupidity for wisdom; as if there was more wisdom required in counting the spots on card-board, than in creating mirth, or clipping the hours' wings with diamond scissors.

"I breathe moch pleasure," she said, looking out on a plot of green fields; "I breathe moch pleasure—se beautiful green—and se tree! Ah, voila!" she continued, as the coach rolled on, and some cold bleak hills appeared. "Ah, voila—Mon Dieu! c'est passé, it is past, like loif's happiness. N'est ce pas, Monsieur—is it not so?"

"Yes, Madam," replied Horace Brown; for though he could not understand the opera, he had a natural taste for the music of a sweet-toned voice.

"Ah, my littel dog, you are not verry glad to leave dis place, no more san me; dho it be ugly place, your heart remain wid your young

mistress—avec chère Lizette—Lizette is my daughter, Monsieur," she said, again directing her conversation to Horace Brown, who, finding she was *not* an old maid, suffered his features to relax, and consoled himself for his want of consistency, by thinking, "She is not a French *man*, at all events." She noted the changed expression of his countenance, and continued,—"Oh, my Lizette is such goot girl, so varry, varry goot; I beg you for excuse my English, and I will tell you. Lizette"—as she spoke, the little dog jumped up and licked her cheek; in a moment her eyes filled with tears, and she pressed the animal to her heart, with all the enthusiasm of her country.

"It knows its mistress' name; it is happy that I do speak of its mistress," she said, and Mr. Brown forgot that the dog was most probably a French dog, and patted its head.

"Pray, speak of your daughter, Madam," said Uncle Horace.

"She goot girl; her Papa, my husband, die, and leave me two children, Lizette

(reste tranquille, Finette) and her broder Charles. I have not moche money, so she say, 'Maman, when Papa live, you say I have talent for make caps and hats, so I will be one great millinaire.' I say, 'God bless you, ma fille!' She one year wis Madame Maradan! Ah, mon Dieu, she become parfection! She get engagement here, as *modiste* to de first millinaire in dis dirty towne; n'importe, dey pay like queens."

"Pack of fools!" muttered Uncle Horace.

"Did you speak, Sare?" she inquired.

"Pray go on, Madam," said Uncle Horace.

"Well, my dear girle, she send me, every quarter, money, money, money; she keep her young broder at school;—I fear she vork too moche; so I write to friend, and day send me vord, that her cheeke pale, her step heavy, her eye not bright. I miserable; so I come to see after my dear girl. I find, indeed, her cheek pale, her step heavy, her eye not bright; but her hair, like de wing of winter's night, so longe and blacke. I have not told you about her hair; dear Lizette! I bloshe to tell

it; yet why should a mother bloshe at her daughtere's goodness? Monsieur, her hair vas more dan yard and hafe longue; but your pardon, Monsieur, I tire you."

"Not at all," said Uncle Horace, "not at all." He listened as attentively as if entangled in the dark tresses himself.

"Monsieur, you English verry riche, but la pauvreté sometimes catch de stranger even in your generous countree. My husband die, I vidow, and poor; Lizette know we moche want, when she was first coming down to Liverpool, cause I spend every ting to send her nice. So she go, dear childe, de night before she set off, she go and sell all her beautiful hair, her chevelure, to hair-dresser, for make vigs. She brings me de money, dear child, for me and her broder, and she kiss me, and say, 'Haire and money both grow, Maman;' and my heart too full to say, God bless you! tho' her goodness wrap itself round my hearte! I ask your pardon, gentlemens, but my eyes make tears of joy, when I think of my Lizette."

"I wonder," thought Uncle Horace, "how a Frenchwoman came to have so much nature in her composition."

"When I arrive, her hair beautiful; but, oh! she ill. De lady of de house love her so moche, she so clever; turn de English ladies into French—so beautiful! I watch my dear girl, I sit wis her in her own littel room where she cut out. I see handsome young gentleman pass under de window,—he look, going dis way, vith one eye up one eye down; when return, vith other eye up, other down; not dat he squint; no, he have straight eye, only I saw dat de up eye was for Lizette, and I saw she bloshe on her cheek, more at de look of dat handsome blue eye, than I, at my pauvreté just now! Ah, I remember my own young days, and mon cher Bertrand; and I say, de pale cheek, and de heavy step, and de eye not bright, are made by love."

"Augh," growled Uncle Horace.

"You not believe it!" exclaimed Madame; "but you must believe it, Monsieur! for a gentilleman, like you, must have felt it once."

Uncle Horace said "Augh" again; but its tone was so softened that it did not sound like the same word.

"I tell her she love, she no deny; her truth always come straight from God, without touch de world;—and den she introduce young man to me; he clerk in great man's great house; perhaps you know de name, Monsieur—a common English name, a Mistere Brownes."

Horace started.

"But," she continued, "though it's common name, Mr. Brownes no common man; he so noble, so generous, though—what is it you call it?—funny; yes, a very funny man—an old boy—old bachelor! Such pity; but dey say he marry soon. I say to young man, 'You must never marry widout dis good man's leave:' then James say, 'Oh, he will not give leave, because he not like marry; but he will forgive, after good scolding, when it is all over.'"

"Indeed!" said Uncle Horace.

"Yes, dat is his way; Mr. James say so:

he tell venerable man, Mr. Jones, who come vith him some evenings to see Lizette; and Mr. Jones say, he know Mr. Brownes vill forgive when it is done, but not consent to it before."

"The old villain!" muttered Uncle Horace: the rolling of the wheels drowned the sound of the words; but they could not destroy the effect of their accompaniment, which was proved by the mustachioed gentleman starting out of his sleep, and exclaiming in sufficiently intelligible English,—

"Sacre! Sir, you have been drumming like de Devil upon my toes. I will have no toes to my feet, if you do so again."

The merchant apologised, and Madame, in the simplicity of her heart, continued,—

"Ma chère Lizette; she was married only yesterday, and the gentlemens of Mr. Brownes house promise Mister Brownes not miss my son. So dey go last night to de country and de bridegrooms will fall at his master's feets tomorrow, and my dear good childe's eye will be no more dull, nor her steps heavy, for she loves James, and he is a good boy—he generous:—

and Lizette, she send Finette to her broder; —he has left school, and is to be graveur;— and I am so busy, that I am happy too, only I was oblige to be in London yesterday, so I set off to-day. I am happy, and I have got lettere of supplication from Lizette to this Mr. Brownes niece, who is one angel, dey say. Ah, my dear childe will be happy now, so I tranquil. Il fait tard, it grow late. Finette, ma chère, nous dormiront, one littel sleep, Finette." And the voluble and affectionate Frenchwoman slung her bonnet to the crossed straps, and, pressing the dog to her bosom, soon fell asleep.

It would be no easy matter to determine whether, at first, Uncle Horace was most interested or annoyed by Madame's narrative. It prevented his brooding over the probable result of his journey, as much as he would have done, and when he awoke the next morning, the sun was rising over all-glorious Oxford.

The Frenchwoman looked pale and fatigued —the most lovely face can hardly bear the

impertinent scrutiny of the morning sun, after a night's travelling. The German was *planté* in his old situation, and the bright eyes of the Armenian twinkled as if they had been taken from diamond mines.

It is very wearisome to wake and find yourself whirling along a road, instead of being comfortably in bed—the sun staring your eyes out, and the abominable consciousness, to a nervous person, that your neighbours have been staring at you also;—then your bones ache, and, perchance, you have got a crick in your neck, and your ankles are stiff, or your feet cold, or your legs cramped; any one to have seen the vinegar aspect of Uncle Horace's countenance, would have imagined that he suffered from a combination of all these evils—he looked *so* cross.

"I hope you have comfortable sleep, Monsieur?" said the kind Frenchwoman. "My littel Finette vish you good mornin;" and the creature put the tips of his feathered paws on Uncle Horace's knees, and touched the hand

he extended to it with its little pink tongue; the natural attention of that helpless animal softened his temper in a way which only nature understands. How many moods of irritation and vexation have been soothed by the caresses of a dog! they are so evidently sincere; they spring from a disposition which cannot learn deception; the salutation of peace and kindly wishes, accompanied by the dumb, yet most eloquent assurance of friendship, and if need be, of protection, are delightful to all who retain a single grain of nature in the secret sanctuary of the heart. A dog's welcome is so warm: some I have known most dignified in their manner of receiving acquaintances, or even friends; but when those they really love appear, the "company manners" vanish, and they are, if not boisterous, deeply affectionate in their greetings. I once knew a noble fellow of Newfoundland, who tried hard at stateliness; his carriage was firm, and his head and chest elevated; he would walk, at first, a few steps towards the gate to meet his master, slowly wagging, or rather moving his tail; then,

as if his feelings could no longer be controlled, he would lash forward like a rolling billow, crouch, spring, and, finally, placing his paws on his friend's shoulder, look him in the face, and whine and murmur his welcome home, in tones that were perfectly musical.

What crossness could stand against such a reception? Uncle Horace could not I am sure; perhaps the kind caress of the Frenchwoman's little beflounced favourite, recalled to his mind his own sturdy friend, the terrier, whom, I forgot to mention, he had lost in London, and failed to recover, notwithstanding his having offered an enormous reward, in the hope of getting him back.

Uncle Horace was shy of conversing with strangers; indeed, most Englishmen are; and, besides, his thoughts were pre-occupied. The French lady and the Armenian conversed in French, and every word they spoke annoyed our merchant, simply because it was French; still the episode of Lizette and her lover would occasionally occur to his mind, and he planned a little surprise to succeed the story of his

displeasure, which he knew Mr. James would anticipate. He was not, however, at all placably disposed towards Mr. Jones, and was more than ever disposed to think him in his dotage. At last they entered London; its splendour, wealth, confusion, order, fog, mud, noise, vice, virtue, and magnificence, crowded upon them on every side, until the vehicle stopped at the Swan with two Necks, in Lad Lane. The German and Armenian got out, closely followed by Uncle Horace, who stood at the door debating within his own mind whether or not he should offer to deliver the letter the French lady said her daughter had written to his niece; she interpreted his waiting into politeness, and offered one hand, while with the other she held fast her dog.

The steps of our public coaches need reform in a very extended sense of the word; they are most admirably contrived for promoting accidents; and all that the most accomplished women in the art of going in and out of carriages can achieve, when mounting or descend-

ing those of "a stage," whether long or short, is simply to avoid breaking her neck.

Madame's dog struggled in her arms, and in trying to preserve it from falling, she lost her balance, and, but for Uncle Horace, would have been dashed on the pavement. He paid dearly for his gallantry, however, for his own foot slipped, and got between the curb-stone and the coach-wheel, which unfortunately turning at the instant, fractured his ankle in a frightful manner: it was the work only of a moment; but a desperate work it was; too real to be tinctured with even a shadowing of romance. He was quickly extricated by a gentleman who was passing by, and who supported him into the inn. Uncle Horace, though a strong man, had fainted on the instant, and when his consciousness returned, he found himself alone with a surgeon, who was examining the fractured bone and a gentleman whose face he recollected—one, doubtless, of the many he had met at his brother's while in London. "Mr. Brown, I believe; my name is Blaney, Major Blaney," he said.

To see a face only slightly known, at a time of suffering, is a relief which, to be justly appreciated, must have been felt; and there was so much sympathy and manly tenderness in the expression of the Irishman's handsome countenanee, that Uncle Horace grasped his hand, as the hand of an old friend.

"I have sent for Brodie, my dear Sir," said the Major; "this gentleman thinks it a rough squeeze, and I know you are very precious to some fair ladies, whom I would not have know sorrow."

"Then I can't take the night's mail to Portsmouth?" said the sufferer.

"If you are able to move from this room in three weeks, Sir," said the surgeon, looking through his spectacles, "I shall call it a miracle."

Uncle Horace was about to call him a fool, but a sudden pain prevented him, and he consoled himself by grinding his teeth.

"Can I convey any message to your fair companion?" inquired Major Blaney: "she

has done nothing but weep and wring her hands ever since your accident."

"*My* fair companion," replied the provoked Horace; "Sir, I have *no* companion of the sex; I have fractured my leg, to be sure, but, thank God, I am free from that misfortune."

He writhed in pain, and the moments passed heavily along; the surgeon was applying fomentations to retard the inflammation, which had actively commenced, and Brodie sent word he would arrive in less than twenty minutes.

In the mean time, one of the waiters entered with a message from "the lady." She begged to know how the *dear* gentleman was, and if he would not permit her to attend him.

Major Blaney, notwithstanding his sympathy, smiled; and Uncle Horace, without any reservation, in his own mind wished them both at the Devil.

"His compliments, and he was very well: he did not want any attendance."

The man stared! If Mr. Brown could have d hands upon any one missile he would have ng it at the fellow's head.

Presently came a slight knock at the door, d Madame herself entered, with that soft, ding, tripping step which distinguishes the ench in all countries. She came to the side Uncle Horace's couch, and with streaming es, urged how affectionately she would nurse n, watch over, comfort him! "I have found u, my dear Monsieur Brownes; you who will so goot to ma pauvre fille; you who are pa to so many, will be Papa to ma Lizette! do not send me away; it was my fault, it is duty to attend you. I see your valise, ur bag—I know it you—I see de name."

Uncle Horace had to contend with a double ony: it would have been difficult to convince jor Blaney, at that time, of the real length, rather shortness, of the acquaintance which sted between the rich Liverpool merchant l the little French widow. However, she s at last prevailed upon to withdraw; not

without tears on her part, and a thousand secret curses from the temper of the irritated sufferer, who firmly believed that womenkind were linked in an everlasting bond to work him evil in some shape or another.

CHAPTER VIII.

> O, how thou hast with jealousy affected
> The sweetness of affiance.
>
> COMEDY OF ERRORS.

WE may picture to ourselves a mariner retiring to his cot in a state of tranquillity and hope; the ocean beneath him, still—the sky above him, clear.

> ———"The evening, calm and free—
> The holy time as quiet as a nun
> Breathless with adoration—the broad sun
> Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
> The gentleness of heaven is on the sea."

But its gentleness passes away, even while he is sleeping!—his dreams are of home and happiness—the sheep-bells tinkle in his ears—he is pressed to his mother's bosom, his sisters twine their arms around his neck, he

has heard the step and the voice of his beloved—she who loves him more deeply even than his mother, yet who lingers beneath the hawthorn—her impatience chained down by that modesty which is an English maiden's birthright—at last he flies to meet her—her warm breath is on his cheek—he feels the throbbing of her heart against his bosom—he whispers, "My own, my loved one"—but suddenly she is struck as by a thunderbolt—he reels from that embrace—he wakes—the waves are raging over the devoted vessel—they howl her on to her destruction—a little more time, a brief prayer, and the dream and the dreamer are with the world of dreams!

Poor Mary Lorton had said she could sleep beneath the shadow of her lover. Alas! the repose of her joy, even in him, was about to be destroyed.

There is a class of afflictions which more especially grieve us if we witness them, because in addition to all their present bitterness, we know not what their end may be! When we see the old suffer, either from illness or other cause,

we think this cannot last long; the measure of life allotted to mortality will soon run over; the sun shone on their youth, the ripe fair fulness of middle age was gathered beneath their roof, the brown nut and dried fruit of a tranquil autumn was heaped upon their lap. Their winter has arrived—the winter when Nature recalls all things born of earth to the earthy, and when the immortal flame, having exhausted the oil of life, seeks to refresh its beams with the unquenchable light of immortality! It is a sin to mourn the removal of the aged. Why should we wish them to remain? Having proved the vanity of all things the worldly covet, their task is ended. Do we mourn the death of infancy? The bud is hurried away from canker and from care—away from evil precept and example—it came—it went—created and recalled—saved from all sin, all spot and blemish—it is a blessed thing to give unto the heavens an uncontaminated child of earth! The flowers blossom early on its grave! Why should we mourn the loss of children?

But the affliction which, to witness, weighs so heavily on our spirit, is that which comes upon the young when their hearts beat high with hope, and their eyes are bright with love —when to them even autumn leaves look green, and winter winds feel warm—when the murmur of the brook is sweet in their ears as the song of a morning bird—when they read poetry in the stars, and commune with the moon as with a familiar friend—when they weep over broken flowers—when their step scatters the diamond dew from the heather, and they listen untired through the midnight watch for the plaint of the nightingale—when the light laughter trembles on their lips, and the blood that gushes through their veins keeps time with virtue, without an effort to be virtuous. Oh! when such youth is suddenly aroused to a knowledge of the heaviness of existence—when its vase is broken, and the odours it had treasured therein scattered to the merciless winds—we feel as if our hearts would break—we dare not seek to read the future for them—we know that the cry,

"Give me back, give me back the wild *freshness* of morning,"

is answered—never!—the hart may pant for the water-brooks, but they are dried up—I do not say that youth can be no more happy after this crushing of the soul—those who talk of everlasting misery, arraign the mercy, if not the justice, of the Creator—such a thing never was, never will be—the summer may be warm, the autumn pleasant, but if the avalanche has fallen, and the violets of life are buried beneath its snows—their *freshness* is destroyed—destroyed for ever!

Count d'Oraine repeated his visit to Mrs. Lorton at the time and the hour he had appointed, and she received him—alone! After what had passed, we must suppose Henry Mortimer worse than weak not to deem, when Mrs. Lorton's excitement had subsided, some explanation of her extraordinary conduct necessary; he would have demanded this at once, had it not been for Mary's entreaties that he would wait, which he did day after day.

She herself experienced mental distress which it would be impossible to describe; twenty times did she sit down to write to her uncle—and yet, what could she say? what had she to tell? It will be easily believed that, of her mother's singular epistle to Horace Brown, she was perfectly ignorant; though Mrs. Lorton had suddenly assumed a business-like manner, and complained loudly of the mal-arrangement of her affairs—evidently without knowing what those affairs were.

Count d'Oraine had called on Lady Norley; and, much to Harry's mortification, he was certainly admired both by his aunt and cousin: there are few persons, however highly cultivated they may be, who do not rejoice to receive an intelligent visitor at a country house.

Lady Ellen was so fond of observing human nature, that perhaps she was not exactly as particular in the choice of her associates as her cousin deemed necessary. She had a good deal of "philosophy" upon certain points, and

Mrs. Lorton had formerly ventured to hint so to her more than once.

The accomplished foreigner did not attempt to conceal his great admiration of Mary, whom he met occasionally at Norley Lodge; he addressed her there as the daughter of his oldest friend—inquired continually as to her mother's health—grouped the autumn flowers into Oriental bouquets—sung to the guitar—and wrote German and Italian sonnets in Lady Ellen's 'Album.' He even assumed an air of protection towards Mary, which was peculiarly offensive to Harry, and from which the poor girl instinctively shrank; had any one else so presumed, she would have acted with becoming dignity, but she felt as if he had a power over her destiny which she could not control.

One evening Lady Ellen rallied her on this. "My dear Mary," she said, "depend upon it we shall have a double wedding—I see it quite certainly that your mother will be a countess—nothing can be more clear—it will make quite a romance—they knew each other

in childhood, or *youthhood,* if I may follow the fashion and coin a word—poverty frowned at the door, and love flew high and away—the old story!—the lady married a richer lord—the husband dies—the lady then weds her first love, and if they do not live happy, that you and I may—that is all! But you are weeping, Mary; surely you do not want to have a husband, and keep your still young and beautiful mother from being happy in her way."

"She will never be happy, Lady Ellen, never—I say never. Oh, if *you* did but know ———"

"Know what, my dear friend? I am sure I did not mean to distress you, my dear Mary—almost my cousin," said Lady Ellen, affectionately.

"Ay, Ellen!" exclaimed the afflicted girl, laying her head on Lady Ellen's shoulder, "ay, Ellen, almost, but not quite—perchance I may never be your cousin!"

"My dear Mary, what means this—no new secret from your friend—I thought we had no secrets now, love, from each other—have you

any cause for those tears, or is it mere nervousness?"

"Would to God," she exclaimed, suddenly clasping her hands, while her uplifted eyes swam in tears,—"would to God that I were dead!"

"Mary!" said her friend, in a reproachful tone,—"Mary! this is not right; you must tell me what distresses you."

"I cannot," replied the gentle girl, "because I do not know. My mother is so changed towards me, and yet I know not why she should be. God—he knows, this minute, that to save her from one hour's sorrow, I would sacrifice all my joys—all *my* joys! Oh, Ellen—I, who not a fortnight since was so rich in happiness, that but one cloud obscured a portion of my sky—I, who could not envy queens! —I am a beggar, a perfect beggar. My happiness is gone, I know not why or how: what little I have left would fit within the compass of a ring."

"But how?—Why?"

"This man, this Count! But, Ellen, do

not ask me—I cannot tell you—truly I have nothing to tell—I would fain know who he is."

"And is this all," said the astonished Lady Ellen, who, of course, knew nothing of past scenes,—"and is this all to so fret and fume about? I cry your mercy, gentle Mary; I thought some desperate fortune was about to break in thunders o'er your head! This is such a mockery of sorrow, that I know not whether to pull these pretty ringlets, or to scold you for an hour by my watch. But is this really all?—that you want mamma to tell you who Count d'Oraine was, and mamma won't."

Mary's tears continued to flow on. At last she said, "You know how ill my mother is at times, how hard to manage; and indeed, Ellen, during the last few days, Harry has been unlike what he used to be."

"Cross, has he?" inquired his cousin, turning to the setting sun.

"No, no, not cross."

"Cold, then?"

"Oh, no."

"Jealous?"

"No; of whom could *he* be jealous?"

"Oh, I beg his pardon and yours. Has *he* then looked too much, or too long, at poor Miss Leslie?"

"Pshaw, nonsense—no."

"Did you find him making love to the sea-nymphs?"

"No, Ellen, no."

"You really then, Mary, must explain the head and front of his offending. I cannot, having no lover, no regular, properly-arranged lover of my own, make out what it is—yet I should like to know—not, Mary, dear, that I should profit thereby, because I do not think it at all likely I shall ever have occasion, unless some lord of the creation should first set up his crooked mind in opposition to my crooked body; and then, you know, a union of deformed candidates might take place on the principle of mutual accommodation. Pray explain."

"You may laugh at me, dear Ellen, if you will, though could you see into my heart you

would the rather weep. I ought to have kept my own counsel. I can only repeat, that I *feel* Harry is changed, or changing. Lady Ellen, that smile was too like a sneer for me to bear this conversation longer; let's talk of something else."

"My dear Mary," said Lady Ellen, "forgive me if I have been a little severe upon this subject. Now, listen to me, and I wish all maids and wives could hear what I have to say—the result of observation. A lover is, in nine cases out of ten, anything but a type of what his married life will be—the more subservient, the more devoted he is to every little whim and caprice of 'his soul's idol,' the greater chance there is of his being a tyrannical husband. He begins by making the woman a fool, he ends by trampling on her folly. This is hard, it is cruel; because though few women have heads, and fewer still are suffered to use them, they have all *hearts*, and they can *feel* when they cannot *reason*. Affection is only the under-current of men's actions; affection is the motive and the end

of woman's existence. Now this, dear Mary, does not apply either to you or to my cousin. He never came under the denomination of a *subservient* lover, though I believe—I am sure he was, and is, a most affectionate one. He has ever regarded you as a creature suited to be his friend—one who would give the perfume of *her* virtues to *his* honour, so that the one should elevate the other, being distinct in glory, yet each glorious. It is ill to say that such a man is changed because he may forget the fulfilment of some little duties as *you* call them, though to him they are but toys, trifles too light for notice, which business, care, illness, nay, a serious book, may hinder him to think upon. This is sheer folly on the woman's part,—to count a lover changed because his brow may wrinkle, his speech be less, his compliments not many: it is a betrayal of great weakness. Men have ambitions, thoughts, and projects flitting perpetually through their brain that we know nothing of; and with all confidence in a woman's reason, and in a woman's love, still they may not like to tell

of their plans till they are ripe for execution—such things make all men thoughtful."

"Has Harry any such?" inquired Mary, for the heart that loves will catch at straws.

"How can I tell?" replied Lady Ellen, adding, "doubtless he has. You must remember, Mary, that his—his—marriage will be but one of the events in his life; but it will be THE event of yours. He is to be a statesman, I suppose, and I do believe that much ambition is working in his brain—*that* may have wrought the change you speak of, for I can hardly deem my friend a peevish woman, to fancy whim and pout for absolutely nothing, though I have known many such Things, quite regardless of their husband's greatness, cross-grained and selfish—I hate such women, they gain the sex an evil reputation, reversing the line,

'Though she rules him, never shows she rules.'

It is good to keep fools in fetters—if a woman has the misfortune to wed a fool—but wreath the fetters with roses, or the fool will kick, and a restive idiot is more hard to ma-

nage than a hard-mouthed mule. I have said this to show my wisdom, Mary, and how I have thought over subjects matrimonial. But this last, like my first case, has nothing to do with you or my cousin; *he* is no fool—and if he were, I do not, Heaven bless you! think you would know how to fetter him. The little lanes, and paths, and alleys, the turnings and pitfals of life are matters for which *you* have no talent, Mary; you will go steadily on the direct road, with some bright emblazonings of honour, and truth, and all the big and little virtues, at your winning-post: but do not, if you value your happiness, fancy every shadow that passes over your lover's brow a change."

Mary shook her head, and dried her tears; and Lady Ellen talked on—she talked well, and people who do so, are always fond of talking. Many envied Lady Ellen her conversational powers.

Mary said and said, to everything she urged, —"it is most true"—"ay, very true"—but still her own opinion remained the same. As the evening closed in a message came from

her mother, that she wished her to return, and Lady Ellen said she would accompany her along the back path to Mrs. Lorton's cottage. As they walked together to the gate, they saw Harry Mortimer talking to Mr. Leslie at the entrance to Lady Norley's house. Mary's steps lingered; Lady Ellen felt they did, and she lingered with her; but the gentlemen went on talking (they were talking politics, which invariably puts an extinguisher on politeness). Suddenly Lady Ellen observed Mary's cheek flush, and she walked hastily forward, as if she said, "He shall not see that I am waiting for him," and so she hurried on, even while the tears were running over her heated cheek. More than once she half turned her head to look back, but he followed not.

"He has not seen us," said Lady Ellen, replying to the gesture, for she spoke no words.

Mary could not speak, but she looked in Lady Ellen's face with such an expression of patient suffering, that her friend's heart ached. She said, "Let me call him; I know not what

idea you have got into your head, but I do *know* he did not see us."

"No, Ellen—no—no—no," murmured poor Mary; "here is my own gate, and Peter is watching for me—good night—good night—tell him—but no, tell him nothing."

Lady Ellen kissed her moist cheek; but had not gone ten yards towards her own garden, when she heard Mary's light step bounding after her. "Ellen, bid him good-night for me, and say my mother wanted me—and—no—nothing more."

CHAPTER IX.

In adversity
The mind grows tough by buffeting the tempest;
But in success dissolving, sinks to ease,
And loses all its firmness.

ROWE.

"HERE's a disaster!" exclaimed Mrs. Lorton, as her daughter entered the room. "Here's a disaster! my dear Mary. There—Magdalene has just received a letter from Mr. Philip Marsden, informing her of an accident that has befallen your uncle."

Mary turned deadly pale, and Magdalene, who held the open letter in her hand, could hardly prevent her fainting. "It is very shocking, but it might have been worse; he has received a severe injury in his leg, on his journey here, it appears. I am sure I did not wish him to leave his beloved business;

yet, as the young sculptor wrote by his direction, there can be no doubt that he made this hurried journey in consequence of a letter he received from me. You need not look astonished, Mary; is there anything so extraordinary in my writing to my brother-in-law?"

"Oh, no—only this accident," said Mary; "how did it occur—when—where? Magdalene, pray tell me all."

Magdalene related all she knew; but my readers are better informed upon the matter than Magdalene was, so I need not recapitulate; the only novelty in the epistle was, that Uncle Horace had been declared out of danger, *if he kept* quiet, and that he desired Peter Pike's immediate attendance.

Peter had been too much overcome with astonishment and sorrow at this misfortune to communicate it to Mary as she entered, so that she was quite unprepared for the intelligence; and after Magdalene withdrew, she remained for many minutes with the open letter on her lap, but totally deprived of power to decypher a single line.

"I did not expect he would leave Liverpool until after Christmas," said Mary.

"Nor I," replied her mother; "but the fact is, I am exceedingly dissatisfied, and you know it, Mary, with the state in which our affairs have been left."

"But you did not say so to Uncle Horace?" interrupted Mary.

"Indeed I did," she replied; "and requested him to see that our money should be arranged payable as usual at our old banker's. I also desired an investigation into our accounts, and I suppose he thought it would be necessary to see me immediately about it, and so undertook this unfortunate journey."

"Oh, my dear mother, what have you done! Uncle Horace will never forgive this, never! —after his boundless generosity."

"Yes, Mary, that was to you; you know I want nothing from him but simple justice."

"My heart is almost broken," said poor Mary: "all this, to him unnecessary trouble,—and to lead to such a result!"

"If I deemed it unnecessary, Mary, it would

not have been done; but you judge for yourself. I am obliged to act for myself, or I should have nothing left to command or call my own."

"May I not go to Uncle Horace? Oh, dearest mother, let me go; he has no one with him. Pray let me go: there could be no impropriety in my travelling with Magdalene in our own chariot, and attended by the faithful Peter."

"And ill as I have been, Mary, you would deprive me of Magdalene's attendance and your society, and leave me to myself."

Mary at once saw that her departure would be impossible.

"I am sure Harry will go immediately."

A slight curl was visible for a moment on Mrs. Lorton's lip, and she replied,

"I dare say he will Mary; the more communion he has with Mr. Horace Brown, the better for himself."

"So it is," said Mary, whose guileless mind did not observe the meaning of these words, though they occurred to her afterwards. "So

it is; the society of Uncle Horace always did him good."

Mrs. Lorton looked fixedly at Mary for a moment, and then, suddenly bursting into tears, threw herself on the bosom of her child. The paroxysm did not long continue; Harry was sent for, and it was determined that he should set off the next morning by the first light, accompanied only by Peter and his own valet. Mrs. Lorton again wrote to Horace Brown, without communicating the contents of her letter to Mary; but she desired that the letter might not be given to him until the surgeons had said the dispatch of a little business would not retard his cure. Harry assured his betrothed, at parting, "that he would write by every post;" and her promise was readily exchanged, that she would reply; "but not by every post, Harry, what can I have to say at every post?" He whispered some soft words as he pressed her to his heart; and, though Uncle Horace was on a bed of suffering, and her lover departing, still Mary felt happier than she had done for many days.

Oh, how doubly, deeply cherished are kind words from beloved lips, where there has been a dread of change! When the last stream of vapour that marked the steam-ship's track had disappeared, Mary felt her sadness return, and hastened to her chamber; there she found Magdalene, and it occurred to her that, during the last few days, her maid had appeared ill and depressed. She kindly inquired the cause, and the poor girl told her, she intended mentioning a circumstance which had given her much concern, but that she did not like to do so suddenly; though as her brother had told her that Mr. Brown sent for him immediately when his accident occurred, and intimated his desire that he should accompany him to the island as soon as he was sufficiently recovered to travel, she was compelled to request Miss Lorton's advice, for if her brother arrived there, she very much dreaded that something most painful and dangerous would happen.

Mary's curiosity became excited, and the two maidens seated themselves inside the green *jalousie,* which was drawn down to ex-

clude the sun-light, that, reflected from the ocean, was, even at that season of the year, too strong to bear. Mary sat on the window-seat, which projected inside, her back leaning against the curtained wall, and her feet drawn up on the seat; it was that sort of half-careless, half-crouching attitude, so peculiarly feminine and child-like. Magdalene was enthroned on a high-backed chair, near her friend's feet; both lovely: there was, nevertheless, a great contrast in their beauty:—Mary's I have already described,—she was unchanged, except that a pensive, thoughtful expression had mingled with her smile, and her hair, perhaps, was a shade darker than it had been. There was an ease and grace, a repose about her, as she waited Magdalene's story, combined with anxiety as to its object,—a sufficient degree of anxiety, at least, to prevent repose from degenerating into insipidity.

The figure of her humble friend was more "spare," and she numbered some eight additional years; but, despite their relative situations, her expression was more lofty; her humility

had a character of its own, approaching nearly to dignity—a dignity originating in the mind, for it was evidently rather repressed than encouraged. One had been the petted child of luxury and praise,—the other had struggled hard with sorrow from her earliest years; but she looked like one who in any contest would overcome or perish.

"I have a long and painful story to relate," she said, "too long, I fear for your patience, for I must go a good way back to make you understand my present apprehensions, my former miseries. You know my early history,—you know that I come of gentle blood, and that though my mother—I hardly remember my father—could not make us either wealthy or independent, she gave us, my brothers and myself, tastes, feelings, and information beyond our station. She thought she acted wisely. I know she did it for the best; but taste and feeling lead but to an inheritance of misery, unless we have a gilded cup to quaff life from; to live with a perpetual longing for what we cannot obtain, is an evil which I

would not wish my greatest foe to experience. You know how daringly ambitious dear Philip is, how he would emulate the greatest masters of antiquity in his art. I remember when he was a child no higher than my knee, his repining that he was not born a giant; and when I asked him why, he said, 'Because then he could carve up the world!'—But our brother Albert (he was twin born with Philip), though not so daringly ambitious, was in the end, I think, more deeply so. I believe I loved him best; I have thought so ever since I laid him in his grave!—his talents were so diversified—he was musical in his mother's arms. I have heard that people are born with that delightful gift, but I believe no child ever started a painter from his cradle; perhaps the one requires thought, while the other may be a sort of instinct;—however, he possessed both; and many hours have I watched them, when sitting in the sunbeams at the door of our humble cottage, occupied in making their frocks, or, as it sometimes was, mending their toys, while my mother would be busied insi de

with her small housewifery, assisted by a little servant maid, our only helper. And there these two boys would linger the length of a whole summer's day, Philip, stern and steady, moulding some mighty image with his little hands, building its limbs, mingling wet clay with lime, and looking, like a seer, up to the heavens, lest it should rain and wash away his labour. His hair was dark and massy as it is now, and I used to think he looked like an inspired Hercules—so earnest, so intent, all strength and mind.

"Albert would play awhile amongst the flowers—a golden-headed cherub toying with Nature's perfumes,—then he would sing, and dance to his own music,—then look at Philip's labours, and, as if reproved by his industry, grow wise at once, and, sitting down upon a stone, a large grey stone, he used merrily to call his throne (poor youth! his fortunes were as hard), copy upon his slate, with all becoming gravity, his brother's work."

"It is a pretty picture!" said Mary.

"It is the poorest shadow of the past that

e'er was spoken," she replied; "I often dream of it, and wake and wonder it is but a dream. Well, it is past! My mother died, and as she knew that both their hearts were set on visiting the south, she made me promise I would go with the boys, and never leave them there. She was alive to all the dread which the old English matrons had of foreign travel, and of foreign vice, and I did promise. I did not feel it hard; yet it was so—for I loved."

Magdalene paused, and the faintest flush that it is possible to imagine just tinged her cheek.

"I loved one who had loved me long; the curate of our village: just what a pastor should be,—*he* had the highest ambition of any man I ever knew."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mary, "and was that befitting in a Christian minister?"

"It was," she replied. "Ambition such as his *was* fitting! He sought to make all small things great. He would take the poorest orphan in the village school, and cultivate his mind for immortality—is not that ambition?

What is the world's vain aching when compared to *such* ambition?"

"Many will think," said Mary, "it was far-fetched."

"And so it was," sighed Magdalene, "far indeed—from Heaven!" She paused again, and sighed, and her eyes looked dark and heavy, though no tears escaped them.

"We might have been wedded; but then those boys must have gone abroad alone:—they were so wild, so madly enthusiastic, so careless of the provident ways which husband a small income, that, even if I had not promised, I should have felt bound to journey with them, as they were but little more than children!—it was a struggle."

"But the curate, Magdalene, where is he now?"

"You anticipate my story: he is dead!"

"What!" said Mary, jumping at a conclusion to which all young girls come, "What! did he die of love?"

"No," replied Magdalene, "men seldom die of that, or women either; but they die of

the wearing out of hope, of disappointment,—the spirit withers and withers away within them, until there is no sap left—they die—not of a sudden sorrow, but of its wasting. My duties clashed, for I did owe him a duty—a duty won by long and patient affection. I acted for the best, but God disposed otherwise than I intended. He pined away and died; not unlamented or forgotten. I left him, though I saw that his hope, as regarded worldly things, was not green, as it had been—its spring-time was quite gone,—and though it had never known summer, it had fallen into the autumn of its days, missing all summer, and all sunshine. I left him living—when I returned, the grass was thick upon his grave!"

"Poor Magdalene!" sighed Mary, "I shall love you more than ever."

"But where did I leave off? Ah! death snaps all our threads. We sold whatever we possessed, and gathering all together, we travelled first to Paris, then to Venice,—no, then to Rome, to Venice, Florence, Naples. At first, my giddy brothers would have spent all

they had, they were so thoughtless; but after a little time they grew more discreet, more wise, and laboured like two slaves,—Philip still the most earnest, Albert the most gay, for music claimed half his attention at the least; and while he drew he sung. I never could understand why, but, certainly, Italy did not agree with Albert as it did with Philip;—both loved the sun, but for Albert it was too warm; and he would pine and languish, his white brow so hot and moist, his thin fingers hardly able to guide his pencil. His strength would come with evening; then, indeed, he would revive, like a sick plant in the soft dew. Philip would sometimes chide him, for Philip made his time do double work; but yet it was beautiful to see them so united."

"And you, Magdalene, did you not love Italy?"

"Indeed, my heart was frequently in England," she replied, "and my dear brothers used to call me *cold;* but they did not know me well."

"How hard it is to judge," said Mary.

"When first you came to me, I thought you cold—cold and proud."

"I dare say," she replied; "a smiling servant is as necessary to a lady's happiness as a well-fitted dress;—but though I often thought of what I loved in England, there was much to fill the mind with, every step I took abroad; the soul feels so enlarged by travel. Women, I think, in general like it less than men; perhaps it is because it has so little to do with the affections: but my glory was in the excellence of my dear brothers, they improved so rapidly. Their studio, for they still worked together, became frequented by men of talent, some poor, some rich,—some English, and some native artists,—painters and poets,—and others who buy to sell again, at great advantage to themselves. Amongst those, there was one, a man not young nor old. Albert met him somewhere near Rome—I forget those Italian names, but it was among some ruins;—he had gone there for shelter from the sun, and was employed in sketching. The stranger praised his work, and he, poor boy,

told of his brother's cleverness, and boasted, as he ever did, how he surpassed him in all skill, and grace, and knowledge. The man came to our lodging; a dull place it was—a portion of a gorgeous palace, where what is left moulders o'er what is past. Yet we were happy there; and Albert's voice, and Albert's music, would often mock the melancholy that hung sometimes from the old walls, like time-worn tapestry.

"This man—this monster—came, and came again. Philip and I disliked him; yet we knew not why;—he employed my brothers to sketch and model, and paid them well, though the story went, that he disposed of what he got in a strange way;—there was a sort of omnipresence about him—now here—now gone. At Venice they believed he was a sort of water-serpent, robbing by night, and playing high at houses of questionable fame, with strangers. Others thought him a smuggler:—some even hinted he had to do with bandits. He had been much in England, and was fond of talking of our country. He spoke English well, and was

accomplished too. We had no right to question one who was so liberal in his orders, and punctual in his payments. Albert called him his 'Golden Mine;' and certainly, for many weeks, ay, months, he was a mine of gold, polluted gold!—the yellow pestilence clung to him worse than a thousand plagues. One night I went with my brothers to the great theatre, the opera of Rome, and there, amongst the singers, was this man; the second tenor. I knew him well; but Albert said it was impossible, he had left Rome that day,—the name, too, of the singer was Mercato,—the name we knew him by, Rinelli. We talked much of it, walking home, and Albert, though he confessed the likeness was so strong, was angry at our obstinacy, for Philip thought with me. Another night, it was hardly night, but evening, we three were walking near the Corso, when a gay carriage passed us—curvetting on a pretty horse, close by its side, was this same man; even Albert knew him then, for he heard his voice, as laughing with a lady, but too well known for the celebrity whose in-

fluence blasts, not blesses, he talked in French as pure as ever dropped from a Parisian's lips; and then, when his eye rested on us, he turned away abruptly."

"Was he disguised?" inquired Mary.

"He was, and he was not. When he had visited us, he was dressed in the plainest dress of an Italian gentleman, his figure slight, his hair, rather light, was turning grey, though his face looked young; the features beautiful, but the expression bad. At the theatre, of course, he appeared in character; but on the Corso, his hair was black, yes, black as jet; his figure certainly enlarged, and his demeanour that of a French soldier, such as we read of; his dress, too, was military; and when he turned away, I saw my brothers exchange looks. What rendered all this the more perplexing was, that the man had professed much love for me; and though I repelled it, still he persevered, and my poor Albert thought, at first, that it would be good for me to make such a connexion, for my brothers little dreamed how completely I had left my heart

in England. We sacrifice nothing for our friends, if we tell them we have sacrificed.

"It was curious to observe how completely this man managed to convince my brothers that he had neither sung at the opera, nor ridden on the Corso at the times they mentioned: he assured them he had been at Venice, and laughed and jested so at the idea of his having a double double, that even Philip was content with repeating, half a dozen times,—'it is very extraordinary!' Philip, indeed, made many inquiries of young men, who used to frequent the opera continually, and from them he learnt, that the person who played that particular character that night was a stranger to the boards, and filled the part to oblige the singer who should have played, but was prevented by illness. What made it more singular was, that the director was so pleased with the stranger's voice, that he offered him an engagement, which the other firmly declined. Rinelli still continued his visits and his patronage; and—most miserable!—his attentions to me. They at last became so

marked, that I was afraid to venture out alone, and the very sound of his footstep made my blood run cold;—yet what was I to do?—the small means we brought from England were nearly exhausted—we had but little left;—with all my care and labour it was nearly gone. Night after night have I risen from my bed, while those dear boys slept, and in that gloomy room, gloomy when lit but by one small taper, I have worked—ay, washed—that they might be like others, and at small expense.

"The abstraction of genius is one of its especial gifts: if it were not abstracted from the world and its ways, how could it ever bear the poverty which worldlings die of? But for this man, I do believe we must have starved; and yet my brothers never cared for means;—and when I reflected I was glad of it,—for they were happy, though the load of care would often sink me to the earth. Had we been independent, I would have spurned him from us; for, despite his talents, I do confess I hated him most bitterly—hated and feared him—both. But poverty!—what sins has it to

answer for!—it is Satan's chief tempter—it not only stamps with its mark, so that those who run may read; but it burns into the soul, and leads to actions which force one to despise one's self. He never should have entered within our doors, but that we were poor! Albert, dear boy, grew weaker each succeeding day; his genius sometimes would fight against disease; and then his cheek would blush like a young maid's, and leave two deep red spots beneath his temples. It seemed the spirit warring with the flesh; for all the youths who watched the progress of his labours, wondered at its excellence. I felt my heart grow closer and closer to him, as he grew more pale; and Rinelli seeing this—for there was no drop of natural tenderness in him—was kinder far than ever, and would buy his sketches, and all that he did, and add many praises to the price.

"Poor Albert, he wiled away many of his hours, for he believed in the virtue and goodness of all earthly things, and could extract perfume from things that others called scent-

less; and pluck the briars of life without seeming to feel their thorns. He could not understand how it was I did not value this man as he did, and I could not endure to give him pain, by saying why; indeed, half my dislike was founded on I knew not what! He importuned me most continually with his love—it was in vain that I declared I could not return for it the least portion of esteem; he even peered into our poverty, and held it up in all its misery before my eyes, as a great reason why I should receive, as he called it—his *honourable* love! Oh, how I wept and prayed, mingling my tears with my hard industry. One evening, very late, Rinelli had, he said, been obliged to go somewhere away on business; I was watering some English flowers that Albert loved, in a small court which led into a garden, a sort of public garden, where the Italians often crowded during the moonlight nights, when a woman stood suddenly before me, and inquired if I were Magdalene Marsden? I said I was. She laid her hand upon my arm, and when arrested by the action

I looked steadfastly on her, I saw she had been handsome, but there was a mingling of fierceness and sorrow in her aspect, which gave me the idea of one who, if she suffered, would not suffer patiently; still she seemed so agitated that I pitied her from my heart.

"'There is a man,' she said, 'who visits you—you know him as Rinelli—do you love him?—answer me,' she continued fiercely,—'do you love him?'

"I was so paralyzed that I had not power to speak for many minutes,—though she continued talking I could not answer,—the woman terrified me by her vehemence. 'No,' I said, at length, 'I do not love him, I never could love him.'

"'That,' said she, 'is impossible; it is not easy to know him and be secure: fairer than you have been so perilled!'

"'That may be,' I replied, for by this time I had determined in my own mind that this woman was some one of light character, who, as Italians are so prone to jealousy, was jealous of me, and I felt her presence as an insult.

'That may be, but I have not been, nor am not likely to be so. I must beg you will not trouble me with more words about the matter. Signor Rinelli purchases my brother's sketches, and has been kind to him in illness,—and that is all I know of him.'

"She looked earnestly in my face, and said, 'You look truthful, young girl; I hope you may be so. It is well you do not love, for—*for he is already married!*'

"Although my feelings were not in the least degree touched by this announcement, there was something in it so startling, after his repeated offers of marriage to myself, that I shuddered, and scanned her doubtingly.

"'You have deceived me!' she exclaimed.

"'No,' I replied, 'I have not deceived you in the least; but though I never did, never can love him of whom you speak, yet he has offered me his love—his hand in marriage!',

"'The villain!' she said quickly; and though she had at first spoken in very pure Italian, when labouring under excitement she spoke in English with equal ease. From this

I have since imagined that perhaps she was an Englishwoman,—people when under excitement naturally speak their own language. 'The villain!' she repeated—'Well,' she added, 'if I have been so criminal that even *he* spurns me, it is one consolation, that I have prevented others becoming the victims of his depravity. Young maid, thank God that you do not love him. Rinelli will be here to-night, —when he comes, tell him you have seen his WIFE!' "

"How very extraordinary," said Mary, "how very mysterious,—who was he?'

"Before I could ask any question, which might have enabled me to answer the one you have just made," replied Magdalene, "she was gone!—vanished, to my thinking, almost like a spirit through the garden. I have her now before my eyes—tall and thin."

"Handsome?" inquired Mary.

"She might have been," said Magdalene, "in her youth; but she was far from young, older than her husband, I should say, by some years. I remember she was *blonde,* and her

eyes blue. There was not an air of purity about her, that air of good propriety which floats like a halo round a virtuous woman. I did not feel a particle of respect mingle with my pity."

"How very strange!"

"There is nothing more strange to come," continued Magdalene; "but something far more sad. I told you I was in the little court, tending my brother's flowers, a portico projected over the door leading to the house, which was supported by four pillars. After she was gone, and when I turned to enter, wondering and terror-struck at what had passed, there, leaning against a pillar, white as the marble which supported him, stood my brother Albert. One glance proved to me at once, he had heard the woman's speech. He was trembling all over like an aspen, and when he saw me, he threw his arms round my neck, and as his head sunk upon my shoulder, I felt the hot scalding tears drop from his eyes. Do not wonder that the young man wept, he was but seventeen. I rejoiced that he did weep. I

thought tears would quench his anguish and his passion, for he was fierce in his revenge, fiercer than Philip, though not so determined. I was too terrified to speak, for though I disliked the man, I never dreamed of so much villany—it was past all picturing. I tried to get my brother in, but it seemed as if the air revived him. We sat beneath the porch, and I am sure that for an hour, at least, we spoke not a word. Philip was out:—the evening dews, which at one time Albert so enjoyed, had become of late too heavy for him, and as the twilight closed he grew restless, and wanted to go forth to seek him; but I dreaded his meeting with Rinelli, and would not suffer him to go alone; and I had not strength to go with him. At last he spoke of what we both had heard, and his generous nature suggested the idea that it *might* be a fabrication; he caught at this with singular avidity, and while we talked of it together in whispers, lest the walls should hear us, Rinelli himself greeted me with more than his usual warmth. At once I saw that he was flushed with wine; but

Albert perceived it not. Instantly, without a moment's pause, he flashed upon Rinelli like a meteor, flinging the story at him with all the vigour of insulted honour. His heart, poor youth, yet beating high, hoping it would be all denied; but no, he only laughed,—mocked at all ceremonies,—spoke, yes, even *then*, SPOKE of his love, and of our poverty. I saw the lion spirit bright in my brother's eyes,—I saw his chest heave, and his lip curl. I threw my arms round him, but he cast me off, his indignation infused the spirit of a hundred men into his body: he called Rinelli *villain*—and worse: his words poured like a torrent,—he cursed him,—he talked to him of a meeting to avenge his honour. Rinelli laughed again—the laughter of a fiend mocking at virtue! The boy sprang at his throat, but did not reach him:—he was too strong, too quick for the intent, and struck him down. O God, that blow! I felt it on my heart!" Magdalene covered her face with her hands, and neither spoke for some minutes. She shuddered, and

Mary shuddered with her. At length she continued,—

"I raised my brother on my knees, and the red warm blood was pouring from his mouth; I believe that he who struck the blow, repented it—his anger vanished—he became calm:—once he wanted to help him in, but I would as soon have committed a gazelle to the tender mercies of a tiger. Oh! how I spurned him, and told him of my hatred—he thought the youth was dead, for he neither moved nor spoke, and terror at my cries, and fear for his own safety made him fly: that was a night of horrors—after hours of mingled agony and hope, Albert revived;—the surgeon said, that in the vehemence of his feelings, he had burst a blood vessel; perhaps he spoke the truth; but I know not, I cannot say—the blow I saw, with a safe conscience I could have sworn, would have caused his death had he nine lives—he lingered for a few days! What days they were to me, God and my own heart can only tell: he grew each hour, more and more like my mother—it

was her death renewed, and even aggravated, for *she* was old, and he was so young and full of promise."

"And yet," said Mary, "I know not how the agony of a mother's death can be surpassed; strange as my mother is at times, were she to die, I think that I should die with her."

"Ay now, because you are unprepared for it—but when time steals on, marking each wrinkle, clogging each step, choaking the voice, dimming the eye: it looks as if the soul within was wearied of the world, wearied of its worn tenement, and longed to be with the spirits that had gone before it!"

"Perhaps so," sighed Mary, "yet I should like to keep my mother still on earth."

"It is natural," replied Magdalene; "I would have kept all that I loved, if I could have kept them; but poor Albert died. Rinelli wrote, and said, 'the story we had heard was the fabrication of a vile woman whom he had once known, and who persecuted him from hatred.' I received this excuse, while Albert's dying head was on my arm, and I shewed it to Philip, who

had vowed revenge, from double motives. I thought the letter (it was very humble) might appease him, particularly as he bade me farewell! but Philip, to this day, thinks him his brother's murderer. We buried Albert near to a ruined wall—and he shall have a tomb when we are rich! Philip has drawn its shape and its inscription, simple and brief; and when he gets the marble, he will carve it with his own hands."

"But Rinelli, Magdalene?"

"In one moment—my sorrow for my brother was not like Philip's, I wept until my eyes grew dry—but *he*, poor fellow, shed no tear, his heart seemed sheathed in iron—all feeling locked within it—he heeded me no more than if I had not been his sister; you know they had been twins—the very half of Philip seemed in Albert's grave, his studio was deserted, his tools remained untouched: he hung his brother's cloak and cap upon his easel, and would sit for hours looking at them in silence; he would sometimes make me sit by him, and repeat from first to last, each sentence and

each word that Albert spoke upon his death-bed, make me read over those passages he loved, and tell the hymns they learnt in childhood—still he shed no tear, and I dreaded we should both go crazed. One evening I thought that I would touch Albert's guitar, and try to sing the last song the dear youth ever sung to Philip; I thought the wail of the melody might make him weep. It was as sad as his own fortunes, though it touched not on them—I sounded a few chords; he heeded them not; but the *réfrain* roused him, he threw himself on his knees and wept, for hours, torrents of tears!"

"What was the song?" inquired Mary.

"A mere ballad, the story goes, written by a bride the morn before her bridal, somewhere in England, and strange to say, she was a bride and a corpse on the same day. I will repeat you the words:"

Hark to the Bells! the merry, merry Bells!
Strew flowers along the way;
From heathery hills and mossy dells,
Call forth the young and gay.
Hark to the Bells! hark, they are ringing!
Look to the happy group they are bringing!
The Bride to her home—her home!
Strike the Bells, the merry, merry Bells!

Hark to the Bells! the sad and solemn Bells!
Weep o'er the early tomb!
And send forth the mournful sound that tells
The tale of grief and gloom.
Hark! what a dull, dull peal they are ringing,
Look to the mournful group—they are bringing
The Bride to her home—her home!
Toll the Bells, the sad and solemn Bells.

"How very sad!" said Mary; "I almost wish I had not heard them. What a bridal!"

"Philip grew more rational from that night, but boy though he was, he registered a vow in heaven, which I could wish unsaid."

"Was it against Rinelli?"

"It was."

"And is it yet accomplished?"

"God forbid it ever should be! but now I must say why I have troubled you with this sad tale—Hark! was not that your mother calling you?"

"No, no," said Mary; "pray go on, what of Rinelli?"

"A week ago—But it *is* your mother's voice—hark! there again, you must go instantly!"

CHAPTER X.

Oh! if thou hover'st round my walk,
  While under every well-known tree,
I to thy fancied shadow talk,
  And every tear is full of thee;

Should then the weary eye of grief,
  Beside some sympathetic stream,
In slumber find a short relief,
  O visit thou my soothing dream!

THOMSON.

MARY was only called from the sad perplexity of Magdalene's mournful tale, to hear the reiterated complaints of her mother, as to the want of money and the impossibility of managing her affairs, unless she could get them entirely into her own hands. Uncle Horace's absurdity in undertaking a useless journey, was again descanted on, and his accident lost sight of, in the feeling of annoyance, which the prospect of his intended visit occasioned.

Mary ventured to question her mother as to what had become of various sums which she knew had been in her possession, and the wonder why she should require money, more than once occurred to her; for she knew that though she had received a great deal, no tradesmen's bills had been discharged, and that her personal expenses were most trifling; though they had their own carriage and coachman, they did not even keep horses, nor had they occasion to hire them; for whenever Mary went out, she accompanied either Lady Norley, or Lady Ellen. Mrs. Brown Lorton had never passed beyond the garden enclosures since her residence on the island; and nothing could have come upon Mary with such startling suddenness, as the fact of her mother's late transformation into a would-be woman of business. She, who formerly would not suffer Mary to learn accounts, to place three figures together, so as to know their value—a fact which had occasioned many words between her and Horace Brown—she all of a sudden to conceive so violent a partiality for "horrid business," was

indeed startling; and the sharpness with which on this, as well as on other themes, she reproved her daughter for questioning her motives, or wondering how the resources had been applied, which Mary knew had been placed at her disposal, made that daughter secretly resolve never again to ask a question on the subject. It is painful in the extreme, to watch the effects of temper working on a kind and generous nature; but if it has a motive, you can bear up against it, you know that its bitterness will pass away, and the succeeding smiles have double sweetness: but Mary was ignorant of the motive and the cause—she saw her beautiful mother the victim of either violent passion, or a more wearing discontent: had she loved her less tenderly, she would have felt it less—but she loved her with the deep and enthusiastic devotion, which like the gushing spring, increases in purity and quantity, from being frequently called upon to invigorate and refresh.

When her passion and her peevishness had worn itself out—until refreshed by tears—Mrs.

Brown Lorton had again recourse to "the poisonous opium," and again sank into the fevered and disturbed sleep which crowds the throbbing brain "with visions wild." As usual also, Mary watched by her side, for she had heard, in her latter watching, words escape her lips, which she thanked God, no ear, save her own, had caught; and she had, under the pretext that Magdalene's health required a higher atmosphere, occupied her bed in Mrs Lorton's room as her nightly domicile, where, poor girl, she more frequently watched and prayed than slept; indeed her cheek in a few days had grown pale, and her eyes heavy. Lady Norley recommended camphor. Lady Ellen shook her head, and talked of comfort; but finding that neither prescription in three days had improved the patient's case, she began to think that her sacrifice had been made in vain, and this feeling added another poisoned arrow to her quiver. The full round tears rolled down her cheeks, as in the solitude of her own chamber she thought over the dreams of her almost uncherished childhood—

had it not been for her mother, she would have felt almost friendless with those for whom she had sacrificed so much; she was only an object of second-rate importance—her cousin treated her exactly as a friend, and she really wished no more:—but where the friendship of man for woman is totally divested of affection—let the philosophers say what they please, his friendship is cold; it is not what it is from man to man, from woman to woman; though perhaps the most perfectly untainted friendship in the world is that which a woman feels for a man she really esteems.

A man cannot consult a female friend upon half the business in which he is engaged; and Lady Ellen Revis had fancied more than once, that when her cousin advised with her on some points, he thought he condescended. Lady Ellen's sensitive and acute mind readily perceived this, and perhaps sometimes imagined it, when it really did not exist. It galled her pride, and Mary's unavoidable reserve as to her mother's temper and abstraction wounded her

almost as keenly! "What have I sacrificed so much for, if neither my cousin nor Mary are rendered happy? to what purpose have I driven not only love, but ambition from my heart?" she would mentally exclaim; and then, conscious of the rectitude and nobility of her intentions, she would repose her aching heart upon itself.

How is it that our most glorious feelings return unto ourselves?—we send forth into the world the hope, the spirit, the generosity of our fervid and honourable hearts; but they are to rest on, or an olive leaf to bring back; our like Noah's dove; we send them forth, and it may be, that they cannot find either a place hope returns, her eye-lids heavy with tears; the landscape which smiled before her was but the treacherous mirage of the desert, and the hill and the water have vanished into air—our buoyant spirit comes back with broken wings—our generosity stripped to very nakedness by those she succoured—our love——but I must turn the picture—I would not

damp the spirits of the young; the old know more of this than I do, whose years have neither been very many, nor, I bless Heaven, very sad.

The sadness I have witnessed has made me more thoughtful and sorrowful than that which I have felt; but my time must come, and then —for strength to bear it.

CHAPTER XI.

> Who,—as she smiles in the silvery light,
> Spreading her wings on the bosom of night,
> Alone on the deep, as the moon in the sky,
> A phantom of beauty—could deem, with a sigh,
> That so lovely a thing is the mansion of sin?
>
> HERVEY.

THERE is a creek between Shanklin and Bon Church, called—I really forget what—and anchored beneath the shadow of its cliff was a small sail-boat, a sort of skiff, better trimmed, painted, and appointed, than such boats generally are: two gentlemen sat therein, having, to all appearance, lunched, or it might be dined, for the evening had nearly closed; and though the weather was calm and still, they wrapped their boat-cloaks round them, and seemed to feel the keenness of the sea-breeze. Their attendants had landed, and were seated on the strand, sharing the rem-

nants of the repast between them, while their masters smoked their cigars, and enjoyed some wine, which they frequently applied to their lips. At first their conversation was carried on in a low tone, to which the waters murmured a soft accompaniment: afterwards, whether their potations were sufficiently deep to account, or not, for the fact, I cannot say, but after a time they discoursed of their affairs more loudly.

"Why not marry the lady at once?" demanded the younger of the two. "If you have the control over her of which you boast, surely that would be the readiest way to possess yourself of her and of her property."

"The first," replied his companion, "I do not want; and,—but this really is a secret,—the second, I am not quite sure that she possesses."

"Diable!" exclaimed the other, opening upon the speaker a pair of large grey eyes to their fullest extent, "you are not serious?"

"I never was more serious, believe me," answered his companion. "It is a serious

subject. You do not seem to comprehend what I have told you before,—that if I do not derive assistance from that quarter, I really know not what I shall do, or how I shall turn me. The fact cannot be denied, that as the world improves, it requires a much greater quantity of talent to speculate upon foibles and weaknesses, which grow less and less every day."

"I have often thought," observed the other, "that you judge too kindly of human nature. Now, do you not perceive that as the foibles and weaknesses pair off, their place is taken by luxury, and a species of well-bred knavery, which serve your thorough-bred rogues as whetstones whereon to sharpen their ingenuity? It is a shame to see a fellow of your infinite variety content himself with poor complainings against the march of improvement. Trust me, the march of roguery and bravoing will keep it company; it 'll go hard if there is not, at least, one Brutus for every Cæsar."

"Muskito, I grow old!" exclaimed his companion, looking at the same time upon his

handsome leg with evident complacency; "and besides, I never had your genius for invention."

"I assure you, Count, I hardly ever invented—*illustrating* was *my* forte," replied his companion.

"*Is*, you mean," said the Count.

"I do not know what good it does me," replied Muskito. "I have no sphere of action left: my success was envied, and I was destroyed, in the opinion of a 'liberal and enlightened public.'"

"Faith, though, your success was extraordinary for a time, notwithstanding your telltale eyes, (true English grey, by the mass!) you went off amazingly well, aided by bad English, French sentiment, Italian poetry, and (I really am in earnest) the most extraordinary facility at—at——"

"Lying!" put in his *friend*. "Well, so it was—lying in the most extended sense of the word. But what can a poor devil do, who has lost what the world calls *character?* He is thrown on his own resources, and were he to

be honest, no one would believe it. Chance or misfortune makes rogues, and necessity keeps them in their roguery. I intended reforming once, seriously intended it, upon my honour!"

"When was that? so extraordinary an occurrence deserves a register!"

"When I was in love!"

"In love—Ah! ah! ah! *Ma foi!* that is not bad," laughed his companion. "True-love, and the seeing of spirits, are talked of by all the world——yet *who* in reality knows anything of either?"

"Well, it matters not," replied Muskito,—"it is now all over, and I shall never make such another resolve. I wish I had the same chance of wealth that you have; though if she is not rich, how could you have drawn so largely since your return from abroad, and even during her husband's life?"

"*Was* and *is* are two distinct things;—that she *was* rich,—I, nay *we*, have had proof positive."

"But the fame of that lovely girl's wealth

has increased rather than diminished; how is *that* to be accounted for?"

"Her uncle, you know; he is the Jason, Sir; nay, he is fleeced in gold."

"I wish, Count, that we could fleece him."

"Impossible!—long, at least many weeks, before Brown Lorton's death, immediately after the failure of *all* my foreign speculations, I resolved on returning to England. There were sundry reasons against it—one or two awkward events, that, if they turned up, would force me to resign,—but, after all, London—England—is a universe to—men of talent:—you may starve elsewhere; but in England you can live. I remembered certain passages in my early days, and resolved to revisit the place where they occurred, and make my observations. Alas! it was a sad, sad change!"

"What! you murmured over fading flowers and full church-yards!" interrupted his friend.

"No, Sir, I did not; I cared not for the flowers, and I only regretted that the church-

yards were not fuller. But I mourned that the fields for speculators, like myself, were no longer waste, but cultivated. Men think for themselves, instead of trusting to the thoughts of others."

"Sheer flam!" elegantly interrupted Muskito. "Sheer flam!—Men think no more for themselves now, than they used, except, indeed, that they hold themselves improved. A clever fellow, who struck out anything new, provided it chimed in with popular prejudice, would stand as good a chance of making a fortune now as ever."

"Then why are you not that youth?" inquired the Count.

"Because I have but the one great faculty," replied Muskito; "and it grew so great that I found it unmanageable. It became my master, instead of being my slave, and I no longer lied like truth."

"Quel dommage!—A brazen liar is worth any money; but all within bounds, all within bounds," said the Count, while lighting

another cigar. "I found the lady of my early love."

"Which of them?" interrupted his companion.

"Bah! Peste!" said the Count, smiling (as men always do at the remembrance of their gallantries)—"I mean *the* one——"

"The *virtuous* one?" said the great liar, sneeringly.

"Virtuous indeed!" repeated his companion in a doubting tone; for persons invariably doubt the existence of any moral quality which they do not themselves possess. "A virtuous woman is like a hidden treasure, which only remains in safety because it is not sought."

"What would your fashionable lady friends say to such a sentiment?" inquired his companion, laughing.

"Why," replied the Count, "the half of them would say (to themselves) that I was a most excellent judge of human nature; some, I will not positively deny it, would say I was a—scoundrel!"

"Pleasant contrast."

"Yes, light and shade. I learned much of its moral and pictorial effect when abroad:—but I must return to my early days. I found that Margaret Linden had accompanied her husband to London, intent upon shining, and introducing her daughter. I found the Browns *millionaires,* but discovered that the crabbed Horace was much the richest of the two. Instead of putting up at the best hotel, in the great Puddle-dock of Europe, I crept about to the little inns, where the workmen congregate, and where they talk at one. I saw the old servant; but I supposed he did not recognize me—twenty years cannot evaporate, when once a man has passed twenty, without leaving marks and tokens, and I was well disguised; though I remember catching the fellow peering over a sort of box in which I was seated with a noted chum of mine, talking, too, of the past, which, however—for the fellow is stupid—he could not, I imagine, comprehend."

"Are you sure he did not know you?"

"I think so; I make myself up to anything; and then, you understand, I was seeking em-

ployment in the foundries. The fellow certainly questioned me, and wanted to get me to go with him to his master, who would give me work; but I gave him the slip, and determined to get up to London. I had introductions of all sorts, and always managing to *be* well introduced; besides, I reckoned upon *your* friendship, and I was not disappointed in *that* respect, at all events. But I had, you must remember it—did you ever know any fellow with such a cursed run of ill luck? Never was anything like it. At play, with skill which, not four years ago, broke half the banks in Paris, I was done up, regularly, and so netted in at the same time,—such good prospects, that I was obliged to pay round to save my character. Many a time was I tempted to cut my throat, and so make my exit in a newspaper paragraph, under the head of 'Melancholy Suicide;'—but there is something unpleasant in the process—it is a slovenly sort of thing—as disagreeable as a bullet."

"No, I deny that," said Muskito; "I deny it *in toto*. Poor La Volante,—you remember

him, poor fellow! What a delicate, sensitive creature he was; the pink, the perfection of good society. He played the guitar better than you, Count, and patronized every new perfume, and new coat in Paris—*that deserved patronage*—for three seasons. The tailors knew his value—one in particular, when he heard of La Volante's difficulties, offered him five hundred francs a week, if he would only invent, appear, and cut out collars and lappels in his establishment. La Volante felt the insult bitterly, and ordered his valet to get the porter to kick the fellow out. Of course he could not do it himself, nor suffer *his* valet to kick a tailor; but it preyed upon him. The idea of his distresses getting about that way —he had no hope either, his memory was gone, and he lost at play repeatedly, without remembering *what* he lost."

"Or what he won?" inquired the Count.

"His luck had completely turned," replied the other; "and his friends he fancied looked cool on him; but that was a mistake, *for he gave the most brilliant suppers to the last.* He resolved

at once, then, to cut short his misfortunes, by cutting his throat; his taste was so exquisite—he put on his black velvet dressing-gown, and covered his dressing-table with black, that no spots might appear, to offend the eyes of those who entered. When all was arranged, he placed a black marble basin beneath his chin, and the razor even which he used had an ebony handle. You see how careful he was of the delicacy of his friends—it was beautifully managed: now it would have been impossible for him to have made so proper an arrangement, had he used pistols: pistols are butchering affairs, believe me."

"When did you invent that, Muskito?" inquired the Count, gravely.

"Truth, upon my honour!" he exclaimed; "nay, to you I never——"

"Well, at Lady Norley's—ah, little do people, the most fastidious, dream who are admitted to their open houses. At Lady Norley's I met *the* Lady—she recognized me—I followed her home—ascertained how careful she was of her reputation, and terrified with

a dread that I would publish all that had passed, she——"

"But what proofs have you?"

"Excuse me, Muskito, I *have* them and shall *keep* them."

"Well, I beg your pardon—but go on."

"She bled freely; that is all. Your infantine flirtation with the daughter, which I could have greatly profited by, but for the arrival of her precious uncle, was put a stop to by the same cause that also prevented my going openly to the house. Brown suspected something—for that Miss Maxwell, whom I knew through you, was paid largely by him to tell what she did not know."

"Poor fool!" exclaimed Muskito.

"Fool, fool, indeed!" repeated his companion, "but he could afford to be a fool—he has boundless wealth."

"How unequally are the goods of this world distributed!" said Muskito.

"True," said the other, "we poor devils toil on for nothing: such dolts—revelling in wealth! Mrs. Brown Lorton gave and gave—

sometimes she refused—then I threatened—at last, when she could not give in coin, she gave in kind——"

"Kindness, I suppose you mean," interrupted Muskito.

"No, I mean jewels—chains—jewels, man,—jewels:—she has not a *real* diamond in the world at this moment—at last Brown Lorton died; and I imagined the ball was at my foot. I was closing my eyes, either as a life annuitant—or as the sposo of a still beautiful and ambitious woman. But the supplies—stopt!—at first I could neither see nor hear from her—then all of a sudden, the idea flashed upon me, that I would follow her here, and *passer le temps* in observation, for the report has been very rife in certain quarters—that Brown Lorton died nearly insolvent; consequently, his widow must be nearly penniless."

"There is no appearance that justifies such a supposition," said Muskito; "their establishment is as well supported for its extent as Lord Norley's."

"Horace Brown's pride," replied the Count; "his niece is to be the bride of this upstart puppy Mortimer, and all his wealth will be lavished upon her."

"Do you believe that this Liverpool trader would have been foolish enough to settle twelve thousand pounds upon Miss Lorton, only to make her feel independent of him, and her husband that is to be?" inquired the man of lies.

"I believe such is the case, and fifty thousand the day she is married—in consideration of which, she is to have a very large jointure secured on the Norley property."

"Then the estates and after-claps!——"

"Ay, ay,—what golden visions!" said the Count.

"My great hope is, that even supposing Margaret—Mrs. Brown Lorton, has been left without a jointure—her daughter, who is most devoted to her, will never marry without seeing her mother really handsomely provided for."

"And from that source you expect——"

"An annuity—never did woman in this world so value reputation."

Muskito remained silent for some time, and at last said, "I wonder it never occurred to you—to—marry the daughter."

"Marry Margaret Linden's daughter!—what do you mean?"

"The daughter's fortune is certain—the old trader may like this young Mortimer—but once married—do you hear?—why what the devil makes you so abstracted?"

"Tut, man, you must be mad," exclaimed the Count, "do you think Miss Lorton (even if her mother could be brought to such an idea), do you think Miss Lorton would dream of such a thing?"

Muskito laughed—"You say she is devoted to her mother;" he said, "Threaten to expose that mother, and to save her—"

"Good God!" exclaimed his companion, throwing his cigar into the sea, "you are the most gratuitous villain I ever knew."

"Your acquaintance has been extensive,"

replied Muskito, bowing; "consequently, I appreciate the compliment—but think it over—it *may not* be too late, *even* now—twelve thousand, *even* twelve thousand—and such an angel for a wife! Besides, you really, I might—and at your time of life—you may reform—think of Mary Lorton as your wife!"

"Wife—wives! a precious bargain I have had of wives," sighed forth the Count; "but come, let us shove off—our fishing has been but poor to-day. What an admirable cloak for roguery is a sail!—we will talk this over some other time."

"It must be soon," replied Muskito; and then he hailed the men to come on board: "it must be soon—for, to use the nautical phrase of which I have learnt much—'I shall soon be without a shot in the locker.'"

"And I the same."

"It would be easy to ascertain, I should think, exactly how their affairs stand——"

"Ay—ay!"

"And then act accordingly.—Why, man, you are not going to be sentimental about it?"

"No, not that; but there are some things that make men feel."

"So there are—starvation in the stone jug, or a hempen cravat."

"Sacre!" shouted the Count with a ferocity of tone that was appalling—coming from such a man.—"Sacre!—here take the helm, lest I steer you at once to the devil."

In a few minutes the pretty craft had glided from its moorings—and before it reached its destination, the evening moon had crested it with silver.

Oh, silly moon!—to shine on such a pair!

CHAPTER XII.

> I know not which is the most fatal gift,
> Genius or Love, for both alike are ruled
> By stars of bright aspect and evil influence.
>
> L. E. L.

Uncle Horace was about the worst person in the world to encounter a fit of illness, he resembled an ailing porcupine: if you attempted to relieve him in any way, he immediately presented his quills. You could as easily have smoothed a grizly bear into a silken lap-dog, as soften down his discontent into any species of patience. Confinement is especially irksome to a man accustomed to air and exercise, and it is curious to observe how ill men bear it; but Uncle Horace appeared to have inherited perpetual health; he had never suffered an hour's indisposition in his life:—he

could understand why women were ill, and was fond of saying that their constitutions bore the same proportion to the constitution of man, as silver does to iron;—but he exceedingly disliked the idea of men suffering illness; indeed, he was rather a disbeliever in the fact; he did not think they were really ill, because *he* was never ill; and he was disposed to look with a certain degree of contempt upon every male creature who was in "delicate health." Major Blaney, though frank-hearted and good-tempered, was anything but a "ministering angel" in sickness; and though he offered most kindly to remain with Uncle Horace the night of the accident, our uncle only trespassed upon his kindness so far, as to request him to write to Philip Marsden, who came before the evening closed. The surgeons in attendance sent for a nurse; but all they could obtain was permission for her to wait in an outer room, and midnight found the excellent man stretched on a sofa, in a high state of feverish excitement, while Philip sat at his feet to pre-

vent him, if possible, from moving the injured limb.

"All through a Frenchwoman!" he would repeat—"a foolish, jabbering Frenchwoman! —a wrong-headed woman, whose conversation was broken to pieces by most abominable English—and that tall Irishman sneering!—My God, what beasts men are! By the way, that idiot, James—Well, well—it is really bad, but it cannot be helped. Ring, Marsden, ring for writing materials; if I write now, it will be sure for to-morrow's post."

"My dear Sir, I really must request, must insist upon it, that you remain quiet. I have written, as you desired, to Magdalene, but there *must* be no more writing, nor thought of writing, to-night. This was especially commanded by the surgeons," said Philip.

"A plague on all surgeons!" exclaimed the fevered patient; "parcel of smooth-faced, humbugging bone-setters! My father used to say that the skill of the faculty disappeared with their wigs. Rare stuff! if they had let

the bone alone, it would have set itself; nature provides for these things. The very iron grows in the bowels of the earth—mean to tell me the bones of a man's leg are less tractable than iron? I know better, Sir."

"My dear friend," argued the young sculptor, "painful as it is, you must keep quiet; you will throw yourself into a fever."

"No, no, I shall not throw myself into a fever; but your oracles will throw me into one! Ring for the ink."

Philip remained firm in his denial, and Uncle Horace, unaccustomed to open contradiction, became more and more angry—it is useless to argue with an angry man;—at last Horace made an effort to rise and reach the bell that was near the sofa;—it was but an effort—the agony occasioned by even that slight movement of his foot overcame him completely, and the strong man fainted. It is impossible to imagine anything more crestfallen than his manner after he recovered from this miserable symptom of either pain or weakness. In a subdued and altered tone he re-

quested Philip to arrange his pillows, and remained silent until some time after the deep-mouthed sentinel of St. Paul's had flung the hour of one into eternity.

"Philip," he said at last, in a low tone, "you were right, and I was wrong. It is very extraordinary that, all at once, I should be so bowed down by this cursed accident. How completely are our actions subject to our infirmities! I fear I have not been sufficiently thankful for the great blessings I have hitherto enjoyed. I will take the draught and try to sleep."

Philip Marsden wished most sincerely that he might sleep, for he dreaded the effects of his irritable temper, and sleep he fortunately did until morning broke even through the atmosphere of the city!

When he awoke, he fixed his eyes on the young sculptor, who was reading by the mingled gleams of day and candle-light; and, as if suddenly struck by the idea, exclaimed, "My God, Marsden, how ill you look! why did you not go to bed?"

"I could not leave you alone, Sir."

"But there was one of those hired watchers in the house, better leave me to her care, than for you to sit up, looking as you do: turn round, boy, that I may distinctly see your face, it must be the shadow."

Philip turned his calm, colourless countenance on his friend: it was such a one as Flaxman would have called perfect—so beautifully marked were the features, so graceful the *contour,* so finely was the high forehead crowned by the darkest hair, laid on in deep heavy masses.

"You are not well, Marsden?"

"I am better than I was when you first spoke," returned the youth; "I have a heavy acute pain in my chest sometimes, that leaves me almost breathless, but it soon passes."

"You must not work so hard; when I get better, of which Heaven knows there seems but little chance, for I feel more stiff than ever, I shall ship you off from Liverpool in one of my vessels, to make a voyage up the Mediterranean to the Grecian Isles, or perhaps to

Mexico, just for a change, or to catch those fine ideas which travellers tell me go floating about foreign countries. Now I can understand people visiting Greece and Mexico, and Africa; the trade is excellent; and when I was a boy, I remember I often said I would visit Troy and Athens. I fancied, too, that I should like to see Rome, if I could get there comfortably without going through that cursed France. This unfortunate leg, which is lying there now, was injured when I was almost an infant, and some one persuaded my mother to strap the foot into a French wooden shoe!—Augh!——No wonder I should hate the French!"

Philip smiled, for he fancied he could trace some of the national hatred he bore *La belle France* to this simple cause.

Uncle Horace then talked on, wondering when Peter could arrive, and if Mary would be able to leave her mother; and then his natural kindness of heart reverted to Philip Marsden's altered looks, and he pronounced a philippic against ambition, that was worthy of

any of those philosophers who rail at what, under another name they pursue. And the youth listened; that is, he listened with his ears, and smiled—and Horace really fancied his eloquence had made an impression—when he perceived that his fingers were employed in tracing something inside the cover of his book:—he asked to see it—alas! for the power of eloquence, against the absorbing feeling of the mind!—the young sculptor had sketched a figure of Ambition, trampling on the earth—while grasping at the heavens.

Uncle Horace drank his weak tea in silence.

That day passed, not unprofitably, either to the liberal *friend* (we will not degrade the giver, or the receiver, by calling him *patron*) or the befriended—for each was best informed upon those points on which the other was ignorant. Horace forgot his argument against ambition, while listening to the flights of Philip's bold and vigorous imagination; he painted the glories of ancient Rome—the relics of her magnificence—her degraded citizens, who bore unblushingly the

reproaches frowned upon them by the silent ruins of the Queen of Nations. He talked of sculpture as the only art capable of immortalizing either persons or actions:—he grouped in the hardened marble the heroes of antiquity, with their several attributes — he spoke of palaces whose long arcades, supported by Corinthian pillars, should be tenanted only by the silent, yet eloquent creations of Genius.

From the great sculptors of the ancient world he passed to those of modern Italy; spoke of Canova, as standing alone among them, like a giant in the midst of pigmies; and, to Uncle Horace's exceeding satisfaction, got at length to England;—censuring, however, first, the climate in a manner which his excellent friend by no means liked: talked of its effects on the spirits, as lowering and subduing the energy which, under the influence of a more genial atmosphere, produces things divine, and hinted that it sullied also the purity of the marble, which showed so white and dazzling beneath an Italian sky. The spleen of the young artist was, however, chiefly stimulated

by the low roofs, confined rooms, and ungracefully-formed windows of our English mansions —disadvantages under which the painter suffered grievously, but which, to the sculptor, were absolute destruction.

Great plans the young enthusiast opened to the merchant;—the theme was a glorious one, and whether from natural kindness of heart, innate generosity, or an inherent, though uncultivated love of the grand and beautiful, Uncle Horace cherished, rather than chilled, the hopes of his fervid friend, lent an attentive ear to his projects, and mentally resolved on giving him the means of working out his magnificent fancies.

Alas! how many a rich harvest has been lost by the want of a little timely assistance to help to gather it in. The wealthy and the powerful mourn often, when it is too late, over the genius that has sunk under the pressure of poverty. The most careless reader will at once be reminded of many, whom a very small aid would have enabled to benefit the world, and, at the same time, have conferred a most

envied immortality on those from whom assistance might have come at the very moment when the struggle was terminating either in triumph or ruin—glory or despair.

The name of Mæcenas is as undying as that of Horace:—the descendants of Walpole might be content to purchase with the cost of Strawberry Hill the renown that must have followed the few pounds, and the few courtesies that would have kept away the poison-cup from

"The marvellous boy who perish'd in his pride."

But in Art, far more than in Literature, there are obstacles to overcome which may be easily removed—but which, if not removed, are terrible. The painter works in the solitude of his lone chamber; and finds it utterly impossible for the early efforts of his mind to procure the means of adding knowledge and skill to natural power:—the contest between hope and despondency is often determined by no other arbiter than death; and when all is settled by the grave, hundreds are found to purchase, at immense prices, that for which the artist would

have been satisfied to receive the cost of the colour and canvass, and the bread which it was necessary to eat during the progress of his labour. Examples are abundant; but they have been quoted again and again. It is needless to dwell upon a topic so sad, so dispiriting, so humiliating.

Whether Uncle Horace did fulfil the resolution he formed, and the sculptor did realize the high hopes he cherished, will be shown before our tale is ended. May we not in passing, however, offer a word of grateful thanks to those merchant-princes of our country who have been the truest and most liberal patrons of the Arts. It would be easy to name them:—but for them, indeed, many an artist who now honourably prospers would have to contend against both penury and obscurity.

Uncle Horace heard the young enthusiast talk for hours upon such themes; and would have heard him on, but that a sudden pain across his chest, reminded him, that whatever the art might be, the artist had no gift of earthly life beyond the term allotted to ordinary mortals.

Uncle Horace at length found it his turn to speak, and he unfolded to the youth, some of the principles which rendered England high, and happy, and noble, as it was some years ago. He spoke of Britain as all-powerful, all-honourable, and all-glorious, both by sea and land; the protector of the oppressed; the true throne of liberty; the city of refuge, in which the persecuted of the nations of the world found security and peace. He dwelt upon the names of our soldiers, our sailors, and our statesmen, who had elevated and upheld their country, when the envy, hatred, and malice of almost all Europe were striving to humble and subdue its energies, and cripple and destroy its resources;—and, although by no means a politician, in the ordinary sense of the word, he could not avoid emphatically exclaiming, "Where are they?"

From this topic he turned to another—one upon which he always delighted to speak—the happy privilege which the aged and the poverty-stricken possessed, of claiming from the prosperous protection and assistance. It was,

he said, a noble law; one which was to the poor what Magna Charta was to the rich—that, when worn out by toil, or oppressed by misfortune, or afflicted by disease, they were not compelled to ask for as charity, but could demand as their due, the contributions of those to whom Providence had been bountiful; and prayed earnestly that the modern spirit of legislation might preserve the Bill of Rights of the humble as well as of the proud.

Upon these and similar topics he would have spoken as long, and almost with as much enthusiasm, as the young sculptor; but he was interrupted by the entrance of his medical, or rather surgical attendant—and was desired to remain quiet. And then Major Blaney came, with his round, good-humoured, smiling face; and told him anecdotes of the emptiness of the "west end," in the never empty neighbourhood of the "Swan with Two Necks;" and while the Major chatted, the waiter entered, with a glowing bouquet of the last autumn flowers—dahlias, whose leaves were a little tinged by the early hoar frost—and Michael-

mas daisies—erect and peach-coloured—and strips of rosemary—and scarlet geraniums:—and there was also, a faint faded sprig or two of that sweet weedy mignionette—"the meek reseda"—sad and sighing, like a faded beauty, o'er the season that was past: and the sallow-faced waiter of the "Swan with Two Necks," presented the collection to Uncle Horace, who positively blushed under the infliction of the Major's bright eye, when the man said, "Madame's compliments, Sir, and hopes you are better to-day."

"Has Madame no name?" inquired Philip, quite unconscious at the moment of the absurd nervousness from which his friend was suffering.

"You should not ask questions," said Major Blaney, with assumed gravity.

"And why not?" said Uncle Horace petulantly, "why not ask the lady's name; I know of no reason why he should not."

"Then, Sir, will you tell me?" inquired the good-humoured Major.

"I can't, Sir—I don't know it."

"My compliments—I am obliged—better,

thank her," he said to the waiter, who stood listening, of course, to every word that was spoken—and who, creepingly, departed with his message—while the Major cast an incredulous look towards the sculptor.

"All I know about this French woman, (God forgive her)" resumed the excellent man, when the door was fairly closed, "is——"

"My dear Sir," interrupted the Major, "you really must not speak so much—you look flushed and excited—I have not the least desire to hear secrets."

"Secrets!" repeated Uncle Horace wrathfully; "Sir, there are no secrets; I never saw her but in that cursed coach."

"Nay, my dear friend," again interrupted the Major, "you will throw yourself back, if you suffer yourself to be so excited, however tender the subject."

"Tender, Sir! there is nothing tender about me, but this wretched uncle!" he was proceeding, when the Major pressing his finger on his lip, bowed, and glided smilingly out of the room. And Philip made matters

worse, by assuring Uncle Horace, in the most emphatic manner, that he never would have presumed to have asked the foolish question he did, had he imagined it would have caused his dear friend the slightest agitation.

CHAPTER XIII.

> They sent the pebble hissing from the sling
> Hot as the curse from lips that would strike dead,
> If words were stones.
>
> MONTGOMERY.

I HAVE detailed so much of Uncle Horace's first day's confinement, that little remains to be told of the succeeding ones—the sameness of a sick room is almost proverbial. And yet his was varied, for the third day after his accident Harry Mortimer and the faithful Peter arrived —when finding him so much better than he expected, Harry gave his friend Mrs. Brown Lorton's letter. It will be readily believed that its receipt did not tend to allay his irritability. This, added to the confirmation of his surmises respecting Peter's puzzling communication; the fact, that the person

calling himself Count D'Oraine, was almost a received guest at the cottage, though Mrs. Lorton did not deign to explain who he was to her daughter, or her future son-in-law—her demanding money and a statement of family affairs from him who had sacrificed so liberally for the advantage of her and hers—all tended to render Horace exceedingly wrathful; and his wrath was really an event not easily forgotten, when it was once excited. He wrote immediately a letter to his sister-in-law, which had he reflected a little longer, perhaps he would not have penned. It explained fully, and in a manner not to be misunderstood, the nature of her dependance upon him:—he offered to send her copies of the different accounts of the monies he had disbursed—he told her, that as a security against Mary's ever feeling the weight of dependance, either in her single or married state, he had secured to her the sum of twelve thousand pounds; which was perfectly independent of the fifty thousand and the estates, that, with certain restrictions, were to be the property of Henry Mortimer, on their mar-

riage. He thus left the proud woman the unmingled feeling, that she was dependant entirely on him and on her daughter; for sad enough to say, no provision had been made for her on her marriage—though her husband was considered, even then, a man of large wealth and possessions. He also desired, and that in no mild terms, that the "foreigner," whose appearance at the cottage, in the first months of her widowhood, bordered upon an impropriety, for which, considering her past circumspect conduct, he could not account—should cease to visit where *his niece* was—as he had every reason to believe him a most dangerous character. This letter was written and dispatched during the time that Harry found it necessary to visit his uncle's house, at the other end of the town; and he was greatly shocked, when he heard on his return, that Horace Brown was much worse, from the effects of indulging his violent feelings. This was not lessened, when he farther discovered, though only in the abstract, the nature of his communication to Mrs. Brown Lorton;—little

as he heard, he nevertheless hoped that little was exaggerated. It is difficult to imagine a more painful state of mind than Mortimer laboured under—loving, as he so sincerely did, and yet so much disturbed by the suspicions the extraordinary conduct of his future mother-in-law could not fail to create.

Mary Lorton had gone to sit an hour with her friend, Lady Ellen, under the pretext of looking at a dress; but in reality, to read her a portion of a "dear letter" she had received that morning from her lover. Mrs. Lorton had expected a communication from Horace Brown, but strange to say, though despatched at the proper time from London, it had not arrived at the Island with the other letters.

Mrs. Brown Lorton was brooding in the drawing-room over this, and other disappointments, when her attention was arrested by a tap at the window: the evening was chilly, and a fire burnt brightly in the grate—so brightly, that she could not ascertain who the visitor was, until she laid her hand on the

latch, which served to secure the window, that opened on the inside.

The intruder was D'Oraine.

"I have told you many times," said the lady, as he seated himself by the fire, "I have told you many times to avoid this mode of entrance—what can persons think if any should observe it?"

"Think," he repeated, "why the truth, I suppose—that if I had not the permission of the fair *Maîtresse,* I would not dare to do it."

"You have not that permission."

"Psha—if I have it not, I have *here* what would command it.—Here, lady, is a communication from Horace Brown." He withdrew a letter from his pocket-book, and held it towards her;—she snatched it from him, saying, "And how came you by it? it ought to have been delivered this morning with the other letters from London."

"And so it was delivered—to me."

"And did you dare——"

"Simply this," he interrupted, "I got to the

Post Office before the postman—asked for your letter, and paid the postage—Ma foi! it was almost my last shilling. I deemed it prudent to see *you open* the letter, having lost all inclination for further delay—and knowing that your last epistle must have told upon his irritable temper—I thought——but read, Madam, read, and thank my *honor* that I did not break the seal!"

"*Your honor!*" murmured the lady, while she did as he desired, and bit her lip to restrain her words.

D'Oraine walked to and fastened the door on the inside; he also drew the curtain across the window; then rapidly lit the tapers which stood upon the chimney-piece, and resuming his seat, watched the countenance of his victim with the eye and the crouch of a tiger. Mrs. Lorton's features, by the time she had read it to the end, became absolutely convulsed—yet she endeavoured to control her emotions—for she felt that the reputation of her future life was hanging by a thread, fine as the finest gossamer. She drew the candle closer to her,

and then leaning her elbow on the table, shaded her face with her hand as if to escape her companion's scrutiny, while she perused its contents a second time.

"Furnish me with the accounts,"—she muttered,—"but here are no accounts; this may be all a lie, a despicable lie:—monies he has disbursed—well, and if he has, is not Mary his only relative, his heir? He *shall* furnish these accounts if there be law or power in the land!"

She had become so absorbed in the letter, as to be almost forgetful of her companion; and while she continued to read it, sentence by sentence, D'Oraine walked behind her chair, and had been a few minutes occupied in reading it with her, ere she perceived him; when she was aware of his dishonourable dealing she would have risen, but he laid one powerful hand upon her shoulder, and seized the letter with the other; then moving a step back, he held her off with his left arm, for she instantly attempted to recover what he had taken. It was the action of a moment, but it

would have been a glorious one for a painter, could he have caught the expression of the two figures:—Mrs. Lorton had seized d'Oraine's arm, and stretched her hand upwards to grasp what he had possessed himself of, in so unwarrantable a manner—her black drapery fell in loose folds over her graceful figure—and there was a mingling in her countenance of defiance and petition; which, though clearly defined, it would be difficult to express.

The contrast between the two figures was striking, and almost terrific;—the Count held back, with a determined and fiend-like aspect—his tall manly figure being considerably thrown up, by the bright glare of the blazing fire, which relieved the shadowy effect of the supplicating female.—All the accessaries were in excellent keeping—the dark drapery of the window—a beautifully shaped sofa—a harp with scattered music on the stand near it—a vase of flowers, round which were thrown books, and one or two single figures carved out of alabaster—all harmonized;—but all were sub-

servient to the action of the two living objects, who were stirred by deep, yet perfectly distinct passions.

"I told you I would be no longer trifled with —I told you I would be convinced," he said, as he flung her off; and deliberately seating himself in the chair Mrs. Lorton had occupied, he drew the taper towards him, and read every sentence with profound attention—from time to time repeating such aloud, as were the most obnoxious to the unfortunate lady.—"Entirely dependant upon my resources,—most agreeable intelligence, is it not Madam?"

"It is false," she exclaimed, "it cannot be true!"

"Or dependant on your daughter—dependant on the tender mercies, the liberality of Mr. Harry Mortimer:—good —— and you mean to submit to this!"

"I do not, I will not—I will put my affairs immediately into a lawyer's hands."

"Folly, folly!" interrupted D'Oraine.

"I know," she persisted, "that poor Lorton

always told me the estate of the Hall he would settle on me for my life."

"Ay, would—but did not!" said her companion; "and pray," he continued, folding the letter, and pushing it towards her, "what am *I* to do?—I, who am here so complimented?"

"How can I tell?" she replied, growing more and more pale, "you must wait, I suppose."

"You might as well," he said, in a low determined tone—"you might as well tell Vesuvius not to vomit forth the lava that is boiling within its bosom."

"My God!" she murmured, "what can I do? while I had, I gave; in London every farthing I could justly or—heaven forgive me—unjustly obtain, was yours; even Mary's jewels were added to my own, to satisfy your rapacity."

"You are not choice in terms," he said bitterly, "but go on."

"The yearly sum I promised, I will give—the price of your secrecy I will pay—if you will give me time!"

"Time!" he exclaimed, "time will not wait

for me; besides, I have sent to London—I have but to-day received intelligence, which confirms this trader's story—you are dependant on him—faded,—dependant,—penniless! ay, penniless as myself!"—"Old," he said, looking earnestly at her—"old, faded, and penniless!—faugh—what should I do with you?" He turned from her as he spoke, with an expression of anger and disgust.

"Then," she exclaimed, clasping her hands, "then do I bless God that it is so, if it rids me of a persecution too bitter to be borne!"

He paced two or three times across the chamber without heeding her observation—and then seated himself by her side on the sofa, where she had literally sunk. As he drew near to take her hand, she shrank from him instinctively—and he smiled the cursed stinging smile of bitter mockery.

"Margaret," he said, "when you and I were young together, you did not shrink thus—you were then I think but fifteen:—we were——"

"I know all, I know all," she interrupted, wildly, "you need not recapitulate, though *I am old now.*"

D'Oraine smiled again, for he saw the bitter reproach of "age" had told upon his victim.

"You loved me then, Margaret Linden?"

"I did, fool that I was," she replied, "I *did* love you then, and if not shown your perfidy by your former——"

"If you name that wretch," he exclaimed, through his clenched and grinding teeth, "I will"—he muttered some inaudible words, and then spoke aloud,—"after that, your beauty caught the wealthy merchant's eyes. Let me remember—I think it was at Guernsey,—but no matter; you married him, and I told you I never would, *if not compelled,* disturb your great prosperity. I went abroad—high fortune, and misfortune claimed me by turns; at last I *was compelled* to gather gold from her, who once had promised to share *all* fortunes with me."

"Wretch!" exclaimed Mrs. Lorton.

"Hard words, like hard bullets, sometimes

rebound," he replied : "take care; it was my necessities—you supplied them only to support your own reputation, which I had power to damn to all eternity." Mrs. Lorton shuddered convulsively, and large drops of perspiration stood on her swollen temples. "You *can* do that no longer," he continued; "what therefore do you expect from me?"

The word Mercy, which, perhaps, as women are ready to bestow, they are also prompt to ask, trembled on her tongue—but she looked with the simple instinct of a child, first in his face, and saw no mercy there: she remained silent for a time, then exclaimed, "You say I have nothing left to bestow—what would you then?"

"No, you have neither gold nor jewels—plate nor coin;—and what is worse, there is one about your person, who I am sure remembers me; though very different—changed in all points—I am sure she knows me!"

"What, Magdalene, why how should she?" inquired Mrs. Lorton.

"No matter—but I am sure she does: now since you have no gold, no jewels, no plate to bestow—and as I must have money—lady, I *must have* the only treasure you have left."

"Treasure," repeated the lost woman; and, looking as if her old bewilderment was returning; she added, "alas! I am *old*, and *dependant*—you said so, Sir, but now—I *have* no treasure left!"

D'Oraine looked into her eyes with a fearful meaning; while he said, slowly and distinctly, so that the words smote her very brain—"*Your Daughter!*"

She sprang on her feet in an instant—and pushing back the widow's cowl with both her hands, while her loosened hair fell over her shoulders—returned his gaze with eyes which, gleaming at first like fire-balls, grew each moment more and more dim, as if they were changing into stone. She stood thus for about a minute and a half, and then fell back without sense or motion upon the sofa.

D'Oraine was some time employed in recalling her senses—and perhaps feelings of humanity really warmed around his heart; for he paused more than once from his exertions, and looking at her with a softened expression of countenance, murmured "poor Margaret!"

CHAPTER XIV.

> It was, in truth, a momentary pang,
> Yet how comprising myriad shapes of woe!
>
> CAMPBELL.

WHEN Mrs. Lorton recovered her consciousness, the tapers were burning dimly, the fire had sunk to the embers, the apartment looked chill and desolate, and D'Oraine was sitting near her. Two distinct knocks were heard at the door: "It is that girl," he whispered impatiently; "tell her you are engaged—reading—anything to send her away." Mechanically she obeyed his directions, adding an inquiry as to whether Miss Lorton was at home? The answer was, that she had not returned, but desired to be sent for, if her mother required her presence before twelve.

"*Send for her,*" again whispered D'Oraine.

Mrs. Lorton clenched her hands together, and exclaimed, "Not to-night—*I entreat* you not to-night." He remained silent, until Magdalene's step had retired from the door, and then inquired if Mrs. Lorton was ready to hear what he must say, and what she must yield to. The wretched woman made no reply, and he accordingly proceeded to develop his intentions. He told her he was so circumstanced, from various causes, that he must have a much larger sum of money than even she anticipated, not only to free him from engagements, but perhaps to preserve his life. If, he declared, he did not procure what was necessary through her means, nothing should prevent his doing what he had so long threatened. "At the foot of the gallows, on the drop, I would proclaim the truth; and let your daughter then enjoy her wealth and her *reputation*—the reputation which her mother's *early life* will bring!"

"You know," she said, "my soul was guiltless!"

"Guilt or no guilt," he replied—"the word is but in the craftsman's book—the world never troubles itself to inquire into the reality of the *guilt*, as you call it, if the reputation of it is once attained."

"Mary would yield you the sum which her uncle says is hers; ay, ten times that, to save me from the breath of slander," said the poor mother.

"She cannot—it is not hers to give—she is not to call it hers until her marriage. Marriage with whom, is not specified, for the tradesman has his generosities; it is to be hers on her *marriage*, to save her from dependance on her husband, that is all!"

Mrs. Lorton neither spoke nor moved; but she pressed her hand upon her brain, as if to stop its throbbings, and then again she listened.

"Let her but wed me, according to the forms of the church, and I swear most solemnly, that I will never see her out of the church, unless it be her wish." He paused long, but Mrs. Lorton made no observation—

she had no power to speak. "Think you that these proud Norleys would permit such as your daughter to enter their family if they fancied even that a stain rested on her mother?" he at length added.

"Monster!" she exclaimed, "and can *you* say this to *me*?"

"It is an affair of business," he replied, "and you have still the power of choice. Your perfect ruin—your disgrace—will make a gay theme for your noble friends—the juvenile frailties of the Brummagem lady!—Brummagem, in a double sense!—or the extraordinary infatuation which caused the beautiful Miss Lorton to elope with a man old enough to be her father;—and then the fact, that on the day of her marriage she returned to her maternal roof, and the bridegroom was no more seen! What a wild marvel! But the option is with yourself!"

"Gracious God!—to sacrifice my child to you!—to you! Did Satan himself ever meditate such sacrifice!" exclaimed Mrs. Lorton.

"Probably not—the gentleman you allude

to was never, at least in this world, as hard up as I am now. Do you imagine for a moment that the spruce coxcomb who ordered me from this very room—do you imagine he would *touch* your daughter, all gilded as he thinks her, if he knew the truth! Tell her the facts and let her judge!"

"I have listened to you," she said, "with brain so seared and hot, that it can hardly take in your meaning. I thought your presence, as I recovered, was but a dream, and such a dream as, in my years of glittering but fallacious prosperity, I had never before dreamed—though, Heaven knows, I had some such then—with hell's own torments—for I dreamed of you! Do you mean that I should say to my child,—'Though I know you to be deeply attached to Mortimer—though I know you shudder at any prospect but that of union with him—still'"—she paused, pressed her fingers on her aching eye-balls, and remained silent for many minutes. At last, having, it would seem, arranged her ideas in some degree, she again spoke:—

„ There is no power in words,—I know you have urged this out of mockery—sport—mere tiger-sport to my feelings, as a woman and a mother,—it *can* be nothing more."

" Fertile in similes," he replied, sneeringly, " but the tiger, fair madam, makes torture the preliminary to execution : compel, if compulsion be necessary, compel Miss Lorton to become my wife—or take the consequences. Shall I recapitulate, or rather, shall I explain what they will be ?—total exposure—of all the passages of your early——"

" Monster ! " interrupted Mrs. Lorton,—, " Monster though you be, you could not do it —if you did, it would gain me the world's approbation, to think that I withstood such infamy. Heard earth ever the like !—to think that *you—you,* should dare to look upon my child as your bride !—can it be that you have forgotten—but you could not, could not mean it—you would not expose a mother to her child —you could not, possessing the outward form of man, expose me ! "

" As sure," he exclaimed, striking the table

with his clenched hand, "as sure as there is a God in heaven, or a devil in hell, so sure will I, if within five days your daughter does not become my wife—hold the moral, the beautiful, the graceful, the *pious* Mrs. Lorton up to the scorn and laughter of the world she has imposed on! Ay, Madam, your life has been one great lie,—you cloaked yourself in sanctity, to hide the gangrene you contracted in your early days. Ay, ay,—but take, take, Madam, your choice!"

"It is taken!" replied the mother, rising with that dignity which purity of purpose can alone inspire. "It is taken—brand *me* as you will, you cannot injure the reputation, however you may destroy the happiness, of my innocent child. Go, publish your own villany, and my shame:—in her uncle, Mary will always find a protector. I would bear to be torn to pieces by wild horses, sooner than suffer such a calamity to befall one so pure, so simple, and so holy. Go, Sir, I know the worst—I dare you to it!"

D'Oraine was for a moment paralyzed—he

had over-calculated the weakness of the woman —he had *not* estimated the strength of the mother—his project was at once overthrown by her determination.

"Are you mad?" he asked, in an uncertain tone—but before she spoke, her daughter's voice was heard demanding admittance.

D'Oraine's circumstances rendered him desperate; he walked to and threw open the door. Mary was there, her long hair hanging uncurled over her cheeks, flushed by agitation —her frame trembling so that she had held the handle of the door for support in such a manner, that when he drew it towards him she must have fallen, had he not caught her on his arm. Mrs. Lorton rushed to her daughter's side, and snatched her from him.

"Touch her not," she exclaimed, "she shall not be polluted!"

"Again I ask," said the Count, "are you mad?"

"No," she replied, pressing her child to her bosom—"No, I am *not* mad; but you would make me mad! I have been weak—but the

weakness is passed,—I have been proud—but my pride is humbled,—I have been rich—I am now poor,—and yet I feel more self-satisfied than I have done for years. I have thrown off your yoke!"

"Mother, mother, what does this mean?" inquired Mary.

"I will tell you," said D'Oraine—"I will tell you. I will make an effort, for *your sake*, young lady, to save your mother from disgrace—from shame!"

"Sir," interrupted the maiden, "you are the first person who ever named my mother and shame together. Sir, I will not hear you!"

"Then," he replied, "by the Holy Cross, you shall pay dearly for this haughtiness; there is not a person but shall know those passages of your mother's early days that stamp her as a thing for scorn to point at. Ask—let her say—let her deny—if I have *not* this power!"

Mary turned her eyes upon her mother with an inquiring agony of expression which thrilled

through her veins—that mother quailed before her child.

"Oh, God! oh, God!" exclaimed the girl, as, shrinking from her parent's embrace, and falling on her knees, she covered her face with her hands, and called, again and again, upon the Almighty, in tones so deep and imploring, that D'Oraine's heart trembled.

"Miss Lorton," he said, while her mother had shrunk overpowered by those simple words, so as to lean against the sofa that was behind Mary, as if afraid to meet her gaze —"Miss Lorton, it is in your power to prevent this!"

"Prevent what?" asked Mary, without uncovering her face.

"Prevent the exposure of your mother's shame—preserve to her the reputation which stands so high in the world's opinion—save her from public disgrace!"

"In my power?" said the bewildered girl, in a tone of painful inquiry.

"Yes, in your power;—if you doubt the truth of what I have stated, I will retire into

another room, and then, perhaps, your mother will explain to you what consideration for her feelings has prevented my doing before."

Mrs. Lorton was too much subdued by the presence of her child to reply to this taunt.

"My mother, Sir, may or may not explain, as she thinks proper," said Mary; "for myself,—that you possess the power you have so basely boasted of, I may, or may not believe; but, even if you have that power, I *will* not think that it has been acquired by aught but fraud!" D'Oraine started, but offered no observation to tempt her either to continue or remain silent. "Say,—if I can save my parent from the *shadow* of shame,—say how, in what way——Mother," she added, taking the hand she had shrunk from at first, within both hers—"mother, I am your child,—the debt of duty owing from a child to a dear parent, accumulating as it does from the cradle to the grave, I have tried to repay by yielding to you all the dear duty I could think of, without a murmur. Sometimes you have been strange and harsh, and I *knew* it must

proceed from some secret workings of a bad power over your kindly nature, it was not *my* mother who was unkind; it was—but it signifies nothing now—mother, mother, I know that you were once young, and ever beautiful; but God's sun at noon was never more pure than you, in all reality of purity. Nay, Sir," she continued, in reply to a sneer of the destroyer's, "you may still have the power you boast of—yet——"

Poor Mary was bewildered by her own argument; she was no less bewildered by her feelings. A young mind casts off all impurity of thought, as the feather of the swan's wing does the foul water through which at times it floats. Three desperate anxieties were struggling in her bosom—a desire to disbelieve—a desire to save—a dread of danger and disgrace. At first she had been unusually eloquent; but, as I have said, she had grown bewildered amongst her words, and D'Oraine saw his advantage. Carefully avoiding all reference to the early connexion which had subsisted between Mrs. Lorton and himself,

and which he knew would make Mary prefer death to a union with him, he confined himself to the uncontradicted fact, that he was in possession of certain information which would blast for ever her mother's fame, and subject her to the reputation of the plague-spot—descent; for he knew that Mary upheld the doctrine, "that a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit." Skilfully hinting that this fact would totally destroy the prospect of her union with Lord Norley's nephew, he boldly proposed himself as her husband, stating *that* to be the price of his secrecy.

Although Mary had suffered from the apprehension that she lived beneath a cloud which would soon burst and overwhelm her, this surpassed all the terrors her imagination had pictured. The praise which Harry had bestowed on her mother's character—his avowal, that he could not love a woman whose parent had been breathed upon by slander, rang upon her heart. The death-knell of her hopes was tolling—hopes about to be consigned for ever to the grave;—even the horror of

D'Oraine's last proposal, that she should become his wife, was lost in the dread of being loathed by him she loved.

It would be impossible to describe her feelings—they can only be imagined;—and even to imagine them aright, Mary's mind, character, and affections, must be understood and combined. Her mother was too completely overwhelmed to speak.

"Leave me," said Mary to her persecutor, —"leave me till to-morrow, only till to-morrow, and then you shall be replied to."

CHAPTER XV.

Thou gazest on me!—But thy look
Of angel tenderness
So pierces, that I less can brook
Than if it spoke distress;
Or came in anguish here to me,
To tell of evil boding THEE!

MOIR.

THERE is no power against which we so much struggle, as the power of sympathy, when it tempts us to feel for the sorrows of our friends; we are glad enough to participate in their joys, —to catch the diamond sparkles which pleasure and prosperity fling to us, as we pass through life—to revel in the sunshine—to bask in smiles: but we upbraid the feeling that makes us sad at others' griefs—we like it not—we throw it away—we neglect its utility, and we care little for the comfort it bestows on the afflicted.—We would forget that the cup of life is of mingled waters, bitter and sweet together,

and that put it off as we will, it must be drunk, ay, to the dregs.

The late light of an autumnal morning found mother and daughter alone in that sad room—the fire burnt out, the tapers like their hopes exhausted—the air without heavy with salt vapour, and within laden with sighs: the mother had told her life's whole history to her child, and that blessed child was unselfish enough to grieve more at her parent's, than at her own, griefs. Mary had never, in the common acceptation of the word, been *proud,* but she was high-minded; her spirit was elevated, and her manners (particularly as her years advanced) had taken their tone from her mind. The circumstances which her mother at last developed did not render her despicable in her daughter's eyes—she saw her parent, as more weak than wicked—and that was all; but she knew enough of the world, to feel assured that half such a story would be sufficient to blast her reputation for ever. She could not even make out a plausible counter-statement

—to suspect a woman's honour is as bad in the end, as to destroy it, at once, altogether. Society is ever too alive on the subject to be baulked of its victim; it delights in an expiatory sacrifice whereon to tack its own sins. Mary almost lost sight of her own peculiar sorrow, in the magnitude of her mother's;—a little reflection convinced her, that Harry was lost to her for ever.—Mrs. Lorton proposed that, as it was evident D'Oraine desired money, and not her daughter without money, Mary should reveal the circumstances to Uncle Horace, who for the love he bore his niece, would doubtless buy him off, and keep the secret from Harry Mortimer, as well as from the world;—but Mary's spirit, steadfast in the truth, revolted against even the shadow of a lie—no, on him who was to be her husband she would practise no deception, however slight: her heart with all its secrets, she had resolved should ever be open to his perusal, as a fair printed book.

"I chose," she said, "one worthy of such

confidence—I would not even *veil* my faults before him, though at his bidding I would mend them; but it is over now—this man's aspect gave him pain before, and well it might, poor fellow! though he little knew the worst. Oh mother, mother, mother!" she repeated in her agony of spirit.

"You have broken my heart," said Mrs. Lorton, "I expected scorn and reproach; I have experienced only kindness, and a tenderness far more hallowed than I could anticipate. You do not hate me—do not cast me, your widowed mother—widowed and poor, from you, Mary."

"Cast you from me!" said the affectionate girl; "Oh, no! my mother—my dear mother! if you had only told me this before, if I had known it, I would not have permitted the growth of that affection which is blasted for ever."

Mrs. Lorton was too much a woman of the world to yield to this feeling of Mary's without a struggle: when she had time to collect her thoughts, she felt that Horace

Brown would sacrifice thrice twelve thousand pounds, rather than suffer the shadow of a stain to rest on Mary, reflected as it must be from her mother;—bitterly as it would mortify her, to receive the least favour from him, still it was better that he should know the facts, than that they should be exposed to the whole world:—he might perhaps pronounce the doom of exile on her, but what of that? her fame would be preserved, untouched, untainted; her child, too, would be preserved, she would again adorn the society for which she appeared formed—agonizing as was the alternative, still it was the only one left. She spoke to Mary again and again on the subject, and though Mary saw the expediency of saving her mother, through the means of Uncle Horace's gold; and felt that for *her sake,* the old man would accede to the sacrifice—still the degradation clung more closely to her than a shroud—*for her mother's sake,* would she make the sacrifice, but for herself, all, all, was blasted! never could she become the wife of Harry Mortimer—never again feel herself

the friend of Lady Ellen—never enter society but with a palpitating heart—never hear her mother's name mentioned without a blushing cheek! and yet that mother, at that very time, was dearer to her than ever—why? because she was utterly dependent on her; and to those with generous souls, dependants are like flowers which the sun invigorates by his beams, and shines to sustain! The difficulty felt by both was in arranging how to put the proposition, so as to induce D'Oraine's silence until Mary could communicate with her Uncle. He was known but too well to Mrs. Lorton, as a man of desperate deeds and desperate fortunes; one of unrestrained passions, and profligate, yet selfish, avarice; that his necessities must have been great, Mrs. Lorton could not doubt, for had they not been so, even he would not have urged so base a plan for procuring gold:—so monstrous was the proposition altogether, that she would have imagined it made only to intimidate, were it not for her former knowledge of his character; still her mind was relieved by the fact of

her having spoken to her daughter freely of her distress, and the persecution she had endured during the last London season.

"I felt," said she, "like one who, wearing a mask loosely upon his face, has the knowledge, that if it drops off, instant death must follow;—had I not sighed for wealth and distinction, I might have remained tranquil and unnoticed—I should have been no mark for his cupidity—the evil remembrance of my first faults would have been obscured by my after deeds of good—but the scourge was in his hands, and it extracted blood, unmingled with water. Oh! how I dreaded this exposure—how I quailed, when at Lady Norley's, on that fatal night, I met his eye—his basilisk eye! No dress, no title could deceive me—in the morning watch, in the midnight dream, at the opera, in the park, in the silence of my own chamber, in the crowded saloon, I felt as if *his* eye was on me!—he followed the carriage home; and Uncle Horace, who had seen him before your birth, I felt assured would recognize him also, for *he* had never concealed that

whatever my present life might be, my past was *at least* suspicious. Your father, too, I had long deceived him, and (do not hate me, Mary) I felt his death a relief—while I wept, I thanked God that he was gone! The virtues of those we injure stand between us and Heaven, and cast us back upon our sins."

"Was he then," inquired Mary, "quite without suspicion?"

"Perfectly," she replied, "I do believe most perfectly;—he was dazzled by my extreme beauty in my youth, and I was still so young, that there was no room for suspicion; his nature was unsuspicious—and he was as much immersed in business during our early wedded life, as he was afterwards in dinners and display. I was the grand aid of that display, and he was satisfied:—still his leaving me without provision, was so strange an act, that it perplexes me in a way which I cannot describe. Your Uncle's letter which you have read is harsh and unfeeling—but brothers in law are never brothers in heart;—he disliked me because your father did not wish that he should

know my foreign origin, and threw a mystery over me, which your Uncle could ill brook. Then, Mary, he loved you so dearly, that he was jealous you loved your mother better than him; he was unjust to my good qualities, and certainly I was not slow at aggravating his dislike—however, he has, as men always have—his revenge."

"Indeed!" interrupted Mary, "I am sure he thought not of revenge;—would that you had let me see the letter—would that you had confided in me:—Oh, dearest mother, your Mary was not unworthy of your confidence!"

"I know it now, my child!" replied Mrs. Lorton, "I know it now when it is all too late! but you cannot fancy the bitter sufferings I experienced in London. Maxwell—she knew D'Oraine had influence over me, but she considered it as one of those slight liaisons, which are continually taking place amongst those who either are, or would be, fashionable:—she had been bribed I know by Uncle Horace, perhaps, also, bribed by HIM!"

"Oh," exclaimed the shuddering Mary, "that such means should be ever necessary!—Oh, if people did but know the value of simple truth!"

"Ay," said her mother; "but, Mary, with women, *c'est le premier pas qui coûte*—man can retrieve a fallen step, but woman, never."

It was a beautiful illustration of true filial affection, to witness the zeal with which Mary Lorton entered into her mother's plans and feelings—how completely she put her own aside, though conscious that the dearest tie of her existence must be broken—though perfectly aware, that if Uncle Horace was won over to pay the price, and her mother's secret be thus preserved, she must appear to those she so loved and cherished, as a capricious, cold-hearted, jilting woman: still with a wisdom that far surpassed her years, and a strength of mind which no one knew her usually tender and gentle nature would suppose she possessed, she talked—it is true, with a feeble voice, but with a firm purpose—to her mother,

concerted the best mode of proceeding, and finally resolved to see D'Oraine herself *alone* that morning.

"I will yield up every thing I possess on earth," she said, "every prospect—I will banish all thoughts, all hopes, all affections, to preserve this secret inviolate: but, mother, I cannot —I cannot—the word seems unpronounceable when I think of him;—no, if he persists——"

She paused.

"We must perish," added her mother, "we could not survive it—Oh, my child, my child! —my pride, my hope, my delight!—it is I who have brought this misery upon you!—to see you either dragging on a blighted existence, dying of that secret sorrow which cankers in and devours the heart—fading before me—or blasted, shivering, and dying—detroyed by a blow, struck in reality by a mother who would die to save you! and then the sneers and taunts of those who envied both—the scarcasm, the spite, the malignity—the saloons—that despite our origin were com-

pelled at times to praise. How many miserable wretches would exult in this downfall!"

"Poor creatures!" said Mary, smiling sadly; "such are not worthy of our anger—a wonder is but a wonder to them; be it a reputation lost or a reputation gained, it is all one: do not let us think of that, leave me to myself—this matter now rests entirely between D'Oraine and me—you need not be again disturbed by an interview."

"It is impossible," said Mrs. Lorton; "you cannot see him alone—you! young and unprotected, to encounter such a man—it must not be!"

"It must be, mother," said Mary, firmly; "your presence would increase my weakness, not give me strength; it must indeed be. I think I remember some lines—my poor dear Uncle taught them me in happier days—Cowper's—I believe they are Cowper's—and, strange enough, though I have not thought of them, I may say, for years, they have come upon my memory now, ringing in detached sentences through my brain:—

"'The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.'

"Alas! I do not look for sweetness! yet the next that I remember is better still,—

"'God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.'"

"Plain!" repeated Mrs. Lorton, unable to comprehend the sentiment, or, rather, its reference to their case; "it will be plain enough, if it once becomes public."

"We do not read alike, mother," said Mary; "the poet meant it as a lesson of reliance upon the Almighty's wisdom and goodness, in which, when I trust, I find comfort. God knows, I need it now!"

"Ah!" replied Mrs. Lorton, "you would have me rely on the maxim, that there is a certain balance of good and evil which renders all things equal."

"I feel too much the pressure of evil just now, to acknowledge, as I ought, the good," she answered, meekly; "and yet I believe that mercy will follow! Let us to our cham-

bers: I will endeavour to prepare for what must come!"

Mrs. Lorton had gained a reputation for something more than morality—for a piety which the world called overstrained;—yet the contrast between her and her daughter was never more strongly marked than at the moment when Mary sought consolation, almost unknown to herself, from the inspired poet, and Mrs. Lorton turned to the cold maxim of the philosopher.

Mary went to her own room, and there Magdalene was watching for her.

"Thank God!" exclaimed the warm-hearted girl, "thank God, you are come at last! Oh, dear Miss Lorton, what a night I have spent! What has occurred? Am I too bold to ask? You will not tell me! Well, dear lady, you will forgive me; it is because I love you so dearly, I am so miserable,—and that horrid, fearful man! Oh, I have much to tell you—much, indeed!"

"Not now—not now, dear Magdalene," re-

plied Miss Lorton ;—" get me some water, cold, cold, to bathe my temples. You, too, have been watching and weeping, Magdalene, if my eyes do not deceive me in their heaviness ;—and pray for me, dear Magdalene ; I know you pray.—Oh, pray to God for me, for I am sore and sadly straitened,—will you not pray for me ? " — and, exhausted, both in body and mind, her head sank down upon Magdalene's shoulder.

" Oh ! " she exclaimed, " that you but thought me worthy to be your friend."

" You little know,"—murmured Mary in reply, " it is my own unworthiness I dread, not yours ! "

There is magic in the attentions of the good and gentle ; there are not only words but *tones* of tenderness that, simple and unaffected, come from the heart, and reach the heart—sounds hardly heard—looks, or rather glances, subdued to the temper and feeling, which are never called to mind without gratitude—that fall like oil upon the troubled waters, and if

they cannot still, soften the tempest. Magdalene's mind was at once comprehensive and affectionate; it understood the grievance and applied the remedy. Having done all she could, she left Mary Lorton to herself.

CHAPTER XVI.

From that wild dream awaking,
And through the clouds of care
The spirit's sunshine breaking,
I marvell'd how Despair
Could haunt a world so fair.

D. L. Richardson.

"Now," thought D'Oraine, as he boldly walked to the pavilion, "now, I suppose, I shall have to wait, to call, and wait again; and then a scene!—the mother weeping, and the daughter praying; or perhaps the daughter will not appear. I am quite prepared, however; prepared and firm—firm as a rock! I am not one to be shaken by sighs, or drowned by tears—I am quite, quite prepared! It was Muskito's hit—not mine! *He* plans most admirably! Young too, and beautiful—*ten* years ago, how I should have dwelt on *that!*—Twenty, ah, twenty years, now past, I would have cursed

myself for such an act!—time brings wondrous changes."

The atmosphere was so still that the striking of a church clock came distinctly on his ear. Above the rolling of the sea, it sounded deep and solemn. "The hour is come," he muttered; and immediately entered the room by the folding window. As the clock finished striking, Mary Brown Lorton opened the opposite door. Prepared as he was, he started as she stood before him, so calm, so collected, so dignified, —a firm and settled resolution was on her brow, and seemed to have influenced her whole form. She met his salutation with an unflinching gaze; it was not a trembling, nervous girl,—it was a resolute and strong-minded woman that confronted him.

"Your mother—" he said.

"Have you anything new to communicate to her?" inquired Mary, in a voice which trembled a little while uttering the first and second words, but regained its firmness ere the sentence was finished.

"No, nothing,' he replied.

"Then I am sure you will spare her the pain of another interview," answered Mary, "and," she added, "as I cannot be supposed to covet the prolonging of this, perhaps you will at once permit me to speak—of—the—past?"

The Count felt abashed by her coolness.

"This cannot be either the sensitive, or the fashionable girl I imagined," he thought within himself—"some new spirit has inspired her!"

"You relied on a promise made by my mother to you," she said, "that she would pay you a regular stipend as the price of your secrecy, for, in fact, maintaining silence on a topic which, if I understand rightly, involved your *own* honour, as well as—as—" Her emotion overcame her, she paused—and in an instant her face, throat, and bosom flushed suddenly scarlet. She put her hand to her throat, as from a feeling of suffocation:—in a moment or two she became again pale, but, drawing a heavy sigh, conquered herself, and spoke.

"My mother, Sir, is perfectly conscious of

the power you possess—so am I,—I do not want to dispute it, I only wish to show you that your demand can be fully satisfied without the means that you were base—yes, Sir,—BASE enough to propose! How such a proposition could have entered into the heart or head of any man, of any creature bearing his Maker's image, I know not! The sum my mother promised shall be paid. I will see my uncle to-morrow morning, and by night, her pledge—and mine—shall be redeemed!"

"Not so, my fair young madam," replied the ruffian—"not so. The prize is within my grasp—I will not lose it;—think you I would relinquish that fair hand for twice the sum I promised to accept as the price of silence?"

He attempted to take her hand, but she flung back his with an energy that convinced him her spirit was resolute as his own.

"Back, Sir, nor dare to pollute me with your touch—you have tainted the air I breathe already—back!—nor dare to touch me!"

"You will not say so at the altar, I pre-

sume," he said sneeringly, and evidently bitterly mortified at her reception. "You dare not say so there!"

"For once," replied Mary—her bosom heaving with the high disdain that filled her soul—"for once you have spoken truly: I would not DARE to meet you THERE—not DARE to fly in Heaven's face, and vow to cherish, love, and honour—what I loathe, despise, and call—*a villain!* Now you have roused me, hear me to the end. To save my mother's reputation, I will give up whatever dreams or thoughts of happiness I had; I will consent to bear the taunts (as best I may) of those I love—to be called—it little matters what!—to lose my uncle's friendship—his regard!"

"And fortune?" inquired D'Oraine, with a still more bitter sneer.

"I did not think of it," said Mary; "but let it go, as go from me it must, nor do I care!"

She looked such perfect truth, that D'Oraine thought she must be *less* or *more* than woman.

"To save my mother's reputation, I will

give up all—that I have said," she answered; "but, sooner than accede to the infamous proposal you dared to make to my mother, I would hold a poisoned chalice to *her* lips, and strike a dagger into my own heart. You have now heard my resolution," said Mary, and there was a fearful fire in her eye, and a deep tone in her voice, which made that bad man tremble. "If you preserve the secret, you shall be paid the price you have agreed on. Proclaim it, and your reward will then be, the destruction of what every woman holds dear;—but remember, *your own hopes of support will go with it!*"

She looked on him with an unflinching gaze—a gaze stern and steady. How different was her conduct from the weak and wavering habits of her mother! Mary triumphed in her own purity of word and deed. Mrs. Lorton had been enfeebled by the sense of shame, which clung to her connexion with D'Oraine—*that* bowed her to the earth—*that* haunted her day and night—the feeling of *shame* hovered over her pillow—the sound of *shame* rang per-

petually in her ear! Mary was innocent,—Oh, how brave is uncontaminated purity! It was a picture to make women proud—the courage of the self-sacrificing girl!—the confusion of the evil villain!—I glory in a woman who boldly reproves vice—in nothing but *that* would I have her frank and fearless. Her determination convinced him that she would *not* be trifled with—that he might make his choice—that Mary would *not* be his wife under any circumstances—but that he might still save himself from utter ruin by agreeing to her proposition, and accepting the price of secrecy from the daughter's, instead of the mother's hands. One question alone occurred to him at the moment, so completely was he surprised by her firmness and decision; it was,—

Would Mr. Horace Brown fulfil the engagement his niece might form—would he not refuse? Mary replied that she felt assured of his compliance with her request.

What guarantee could Miss Lorton give him?

HER WORD.

Strange as it may seem, D'Oraine did not sneer at the security; he remained silent; and Mary added, "If I do not keep my word, your revenge is in your hands; you will hold the same power to-morrow that you do to-day. I do not even request you to exercise it with mercy—I do not require nor hope for it at your hands—it is a bargain I would strike. Well I know that had a spark of humanity, a feeling connected with the noble nature of man, dwelt within your bosom, you would not have driven my mother, as you have done, to the verge of madness, nor suffered a girl like me to speak in such a cause. I have shown you the two sides of the picture, as far as your own interests are concerned—I know you heed no other!"

For full five minutes D'Oraine paced up and down the chamber, looking occasionally at Mary, to ascertain if her purpose was really so fixed as she declared. Had she been marble, she could not have been more immoveable; the colour had completely faded from her

cheek and lips—her eyes were fixed and stern—her figure rigid and erect—and when he endeavoured to meet her gaze, his eyes fell before it.

At last he paused, and an emotion betrayed itself in the silent working of his lips—they quivered, though he bit them into stillness—he advanced a step or two towards Miss Lorton; and when he could sufficiently command his voice he addressed her:—

"You think me, and have called me a villain. What I was, matters not; what I am, what I may be, is of little consequence to you. I *am* a villain, Miss Lorton; yet I could tell you—as what man, however bad, could not?—of a time when my heart was pure, and my spirit brave! I plunged into the stream of life at the wrong end—I began where many terminate their career. Your mother——"

"I do not want, Sir," interrupted Mary, bitterly, "to hear your confession, much less to hear *you* mention *her* name!"

"Enough, young lady," he replied; "but it needs not so much sternness on your part to

repress what I would have said. Think not to escape me by any *ruse,*—you have named your own terms, which I accept. I will wait the time you *have* named, *and no longer,*—not one hour longer than you yourself have mentioned. I know where Mr. Brown is—we meet again in London."

Without further word he gathered his cloak round him, and strode from the folding window. When the sound of his last footsteps had died upon her ear, Mary fell on her knees, and prayed within her own heart for strength to accomplish her purpose.

"So far," she thought, "all is well. I will see Uncle Horace, and tell him the *whole* truth. I know he will save us. I will whisper my mother's secret so gently in his ear, that the air of Heaven shall not hear it; with him it will be inviolate. I will see Harry *for the last time,* for he shall never wed a woman whom he would consider tainted, if he knew the truth. God!—God enable me to bear this trial, which now I shudder but to look on distantly! Erring parents little think of the misery they

entail upon their progeny. My poor, poor mother! if she sinned she has suffered. What will Lady Ellen think, when I steadily refuse to marry him whom I never knew I loved so dearly until now! What will she say—perhaps she will herself become his bride! Shall I venture to take Magdalene from my mother on this journey—or shall I find some other attendant: at all events, I must lose no time." She added, as her eye rested on the moving hands of the pendule—" Time! it is flying fast!"

These, and a thousand other hopes, fears, and surmises, passed rapidly through her mind while preparing for her departure. How incongruous are thoughts, if they were but faithfully recorded! What an extraordinary mass of mind would be concentrated, if the heart's journal, and the fevered imaginings of the brain, were really registered!—their wild irregularities—their fearful boldness—their usefulness and activity in project—their strange supineness in deed—their bitterness and malice, and their yearnings after better things!

Poor Mary!—she had steeled her heart—she had wound herself up to her fearful task—and yet she had much to encounter, which she dreamed not of.

CHAPTER XVII.

The fear which hath no name, hath wrought a spell!
Strength, courage, wrath—have been, and left no traces!
They came—and fled;—but whither?—who can tell?

BARRY CORNWALL.

WHEN D'Oraine left Mary Lorton, he strode onwards with the step of a giant, or rather with that of a man under strong and painful excitement, grasping his cloak closely, and more closely within his clenched hand, and with the other fixing his hat firmly on his head. He left the high road, and descended, after a prolonged walk, the path that winds from the top to the bottom of Shanklin Chine. The trees which in the summer clothe that beautiful pass with many-tinted beauty, were now shorn of more than half their autumn leaves by the sharp sea-breeze, which sent the

parched foliage rattling to the beach; his foot trod the crackling leaves, and the wind whistled amongst the branches. The sea was of the heavy leaden colour that betokens storm, and the sea-birds gathered in whirling companies to their homes amid the crags. When on the beach, D'Oraine's thoughts were so preoccupied that he stumbled frequently over the huge shingles which intercepted his path; yet his speed remained unabated until he arrived at a shelving rock, to which the boat I before mentioned was fastened by a long thin cable, which, thin as it was, appeared of more than sufficient strength to hold the little vessel to the shore. The tide was in, and the boat danced upon the waters. There was no living thing in it but a small rough dog, who wagged his tail and jumped with evident joy at the Count's appearance. In a few minutes he wound the cable sufficiently to bring the boat near the shore, and then stept so lightly into her, that she hardly dipt in the wave.

He first examined the locker; and then lifted up a little board, that moved on a hinge, and ap-

parently concealed a small box. If he expected to find anything in it, he was disappointed, and he immediately shut it down, with an irritation of manner that could not be mistaken. He then stood erect in the boat, and scanned the line of coast within his gaze: not content with this examination, he drew a small pocket-glass from his vest, and repeated his scrutiny, evidently with as little satisfaction to himself, for, muttering a bitter "*Sacre!*" or two, he sprang to the shore, and loosened the bark to her original mooring. The poor little dog, left again to his solitude, whined and whimpered most sadly as his master continued his walk along the shingles, until he nearly reached Ryde, then ascending a path-way in the cliff, he strode onwards to what appeared a fishing-lodge, and inquired if his friend had been there that morning; the reply was, that he had, but was gone on to Newport.

The "Sacres" were repeated with sundry additions, and D'Oraine, after some difficulty and delay, procured a horse, which he forced into a gallop on the Newport road. The day

was far advanced when he discovered the object of his search, elaborately dressed as usual, magnificent in waistcoat and gold chain, playing "the devoted" to a rather antiquated lady of the island, whose fame for wealth was greater than her reputation for amiability.

It was some time before Muskito could be drawn from her society; he had succeeded beyond even his hopes, and impressed her with an idea of his bravery in war, and his success in love—two sure ways to a vulgar woman's heart; and when D'Oraine had got him into the privacy of one of the quietest rooms at the inn, it was some time before he could get him off the stilts whereon this new speculation had exalted him.

"I should not exactly," he said, "like to have the knot tied on the same day with you, *mon bon ami*—for your fair one's beauty would rather throw the charms of *my* Dulcinea in the shade; though, *ma foi!* blonde and bustle has more to do with the charms of complexion and figure than persons generally imagine."

"You are in high spirits, Muskito," growled D'Oraine sulkily.

"I am, and you are not," was the reply.

"No wonder—I expected you to be at our old tryste at the boat; but you set sail after the petticoats, quite forgetting how our fates are linked together."

"Your pardon," said the other, elevating his eyebrows; "I have no forgetfulness about it; we are linked together like the Siamese twins—a new reading of Damon and Pythias—a——"

"Bah!—curse your nonsense," interrupted D'Oraine, "I must to London to-night, and you must help me with the means."

"To London to-night!" repeated Muskito; —"to-night to London! why, you are mad."

"Mad! gads, no; I never was farther from madness in my life, for I have been fooled—fooled by a girl!"

"Ah! my dear friend!" said Muskito, with a sanctified look; "you have one great card to play, and you ought not to have formed any of those '*petit liaisons*,' which, however agreeable, are at particular times dangerous—danger-

ous in the extreme. You ought to remember that your character, my friend—your character is at stake; which simply means, that though you have not committed any new crime, your old ones are in danger of being found out; —now, knowing that, you really ought not to trifle with the belle sexe—"

"Trifle!—trifle, indeed! you should have seen my interview this morning with Miss Brown Lorton, and then think of trifling."

"Oh, Miss Lorton," smiled the other roué, "ah, my dear fellow, you were trifling there; I forgive you, you see, *mon cher Comte*—I was careful of your morality—your morality! Give me credit for discovering in my friend a quality which he was ignorant he possessed!"

"It is you who trifle!" exclaimed D'Oraine, in anger. "Listen, and listen calmly if you can, for I need your advice: you are the coolest scoundrel of the two, and I never needed your counsel so much—my fortune hangs upon a thread."

"*Our fortunes,* if you please;" observed the other, "remember our contract."

D'Oraine, without further parley, explained the character of the interview he had had with both mother and daughter, and repeated Mary's offer and determination, with a fidelity which his lying companion could not have achieved.

"I thought," he added, "I had her in my power, but her coolness turned the balance;—what I shall receive, even if this wealthy trader accedes to her request, will fall far short of what I require to remain in England,—it would only serve to——"

"Take *us* to another hemisphere," interrupted Muskito, "to transport us to the regions of savage life, where there are no luxuries, and where the field for the exercise or display of talents, such as ours, is so limited, that life is not worth having. Besides, the only man that ever could outlie me, was an American!—This will not do; you have played your cards most badly—you should not have suffered her to suppose you would abate an iota of your original demand.—I tell you again, that girl would permit herself to be torn to pieces by wild

horses, ere she would let her mother's reputation suffer—with all her meekness she is proud as Lucifer! I know it; I have seen it during the last season a thousand times; besides, she loves her mother; you should have worked on *that;* a woman will die to fulfil whatever love she takes."

"And so would she," exclaimed D'Oraine; "so would she—*die,* but not *sin.*"

"Psha!" said Muskito, "it is only at first that women are so scrupulous—'tis the first plunge they dread; after that, the deeper the sin the sweeter they think it."

"But she will not take the plunge."

"Why, what a poor, weak, undetermined fool you are," replied his companion, in his half-broken English; "I am ashamed of you! Do you remember one day last week we stood upon the beach at Cowes, and saw a young and lovely mother undress her child that it might bathe?—she gave it fruit, and cakes, and promises, and such sweet kisses, that I envied the young urchin; still he would not bathe, not he—when suddenly one of those wild hags

who struggle with the waters, seized on him, and down he went, screaming and kicking like a drowning puppy;—again she dipt him in the surge——! why, two days after I saw him playing with the waves: mind you, 'twas the *first plunge* that conquered!"

"How could I force this?"

"Not suffer her to leave the island: are you sure she's gone?"

"Certain:—she'll post it up to Horace Brown, and I must follow."

"Follow! to have a beggar's portion doled out! If you had managed rightly you might have had the whole;—her uncle worships her!"

"I am sick of it altogether!" said D'Oraine.

"Then starve!" replied his *friend;* "rot in a gaol, or dangle from a gallows."

"Not quite," said D'Oraine calmly, and while he spoke he drew a small pistol from his bosom: "not quite, while I have this."

"Listen!" exclaimed the more inventive ruffian, "it may not yet be too late; are you sure that she is really gone?"

"Certain: as I passed along one of the sea-side pathways coming from the beach, when I thought that I should find tidings of you whereabouts in our boat, I saw their carriage driving on towards Ryde—even now I dare to say she is half-way across to Portsmouth or Southampton."

"Still," said the other, "I repeat, it may not, must not, be too late—let us follow; there may be delays—she must travel in the night to be in time, with no one but a careless servant—we have taken the road ere now, and with success."

"Not in England," replied D'Oraine; "those deeds were in a sunny country, where such deeds are pleasant, downright pleasant pastimes; here roads are well guarded, and adventure totally unknown—besides, to what purpose would it tend if I delayed her journey?"

"Look ye, Sir Count;" observed Muskito, with bitter sarcasm; "look ye, you have wiled me into a fool's paradise, and entangled me in your affairs, by your promises, that when this money, to be paid by your fair widow, did ar-

rive, my engagements should be fulfilled. I gave up all speculation to attend you here, and now you suffer the girl to escape, and rest satisfied to be thrown on the generosity of a man who has sufficiently the honour of your knowledge, to hold you in the most utter abhorrence!"

"You do not read it rightly, my good friend!" replied D'Oraine, "though I have explained it exactly."

"Read or not read," said the other, "my determination is taken: we must instantly follow this fair maid—I can depend on my rascal, and yours can remain here until farther notice. We must follow and seize this heiress in the pure and immaculate abodes of Portsmouth —there are abundance of places, where the high-souled Signora can be concealed, until what is necessary be forced from her uncle."

"To put our lives in jeopardy!" hinted D'Oraine.

"Peste!" exclaimed his companion; "why you forget that our lives are not worth two months' purchase; not exactly from the gal-

lows, but from necessities which you full well know. What worse are we off than before It is but, after all, hostage taking!'

"Oh, oh," said D'Oraine, "I do not care about the wrong or right: I should like to trample her proud spirit, after this morning's insolence."

"And to you, too," sneered the other, whose character was a mingling of the monkey and the tiger: "to you, too, who have so strong a claim to her respect and *duty!*"

"Holy St. Mark!" ejaculated D'Oraine, "you are a worse devil than I, even I, thought you: if you blast me again with such an allusion, by the holy Lord I'll not stir hand or foot in it more."

"Then lie down and be kicked by every chick, whether game or tame, that flies at you. Come, don't be sulky; are we not friends? bound by the strong ties of mutual interest? Come, it will be a gay adventure—the packet met with an accident this morning, and if we hasten we shall get right under this strong breeze;—the nights are dark;—we'll plan as

we go on. Well armed, prepared, 'twill make her cry peccavi, and spunge the money out of that old hunks. We'll treat her gently, if that will please you best; but there are places where all the police in England could not find her. We'll make her write to the Liverpool merchant, and prove the quality of his metal —touch up his sovereigns—teach him civility. Sir, he would give, ay, all he's worth, to save that girl from harm or slander. I can tell you an admirable story about the Pope's niece, under somewhat similar circumstances—but I forgot, you do not believe my stories. This is a jewel of a plan, and shall yield us jewels; only we must elope. Well, gold will make us an Arcadia, wherever we can go!"

The arguments of Muskito and the desires of D'Oraine both tended to the same purpose, and a few brief hours found them at Portsmouth, well armed, and prepared for an act of most audacious daring: the servant Muskito alluded to, was every way worthy of such a master. Owing to the short delay occasioned by an accident which occurred to the steam-

boat, they reached Portsmouth in considerably less than an hour after her arrival, and soon discovered that Miss Lorton, attended only by a young girl and a single footman, had left the hotel only a few minutes before the inquiry was made.

CHAPTER XVII.

> But those for whom I pour the lay,
> Not wild-wood deep, nor mountain gray,
> Not this deep dell that shrouds from day,
> Could screen from treacherous cruelty!
>
> SCOTT.

FEW things so heavily oppress the spirits as an autumnal landscape:—its hues, its sounds, its scents, are all melancholy. Autumn is the only sad season of the year; it is called the season of fulfilment,—yet when was hope fulfilled!

"When was hope fulfilled!" sighed Mary Lorton, as she folded her shawl more closely round her, and looked out upon the already naked trees and almost leafless hedges, where the robin twittered and the ragged net of the departed spider glittered in the sparkling frost.

Her carriage rolled rapidly along for some time, and though the prospect became shrouded in a dense yellow fog, which thickened every moment, she heeded it not; so entirely was her mind engrossed by remembrance of the past, and apprehension of the future.

At the termination of the first stage, she heard her servant order horses on to the next, and in reply the ostler said, that the night had grown so perilous he could not say whether or not his master would venture to let them out.

Mary let down the glass; the fog which entered almost suffocated her, and though even Magdalene shrank from its chilling influence, she hardly analyzed the cause which had added to her misery of mind and body. Immediately the landlord came, and she heard him say, "Only one lady, and on to London to-night?—it is as much as her life is worth; I hardly ever remember so thick a fog and hard a frost set in together, and all within an hour or two."

"Nevertheless," said Mary, "go on I must, I care not what you charge for horses. I will pay double, treble, and be answerable for

any danger, any risk, any loss; only I must go on."

The landlord bowed, and the postboys, stimulated to increased zeal, by the hope of double fees, agreed with cheerful voices that the road was straight and safe, and that with good lights there could be no danger.

"Let horses then be put to, instantly," exclaimed Mary, impatient even of the necessary delay.

"I am very sorry, ma'am, very," said the landlord, bowing lower than before, "but two of the London coaches have just changed, and taken all those that were frosted; the rest are now at the forge, and a pair will be ready in fifteen or twenty minutes—perhaps you would alight, and sit by the fire meanwhile; it is so dreadfully cold, and these November fogs are dangerous, quite dangerous."

"I must have four horses," replied Mary, impatiently.

"Undoubtedly, madam, certainly," said the landlord, "in half an hour they will be quite ready—there is not finer cattle on the road."

"You said fifteen minutes," said Mary, drawing back as he let down the steps.

"True, madam, but that was for a pair,—this frost has come on so suddenly that we are quite unprepared—quite. I really, madam, could not permit any lady to leave my house without seeing that the horses' shoes were safe; it would dwell upon my conscience, madam," he added, bowing very low, and pressing his hand on the well-starched ruffle of his shirt.

"Are you cold, Magdalene?" inquired Mary, hoping she was not, and yet, with her usual consideration for the feelings of others, willing to sacrifice her own and enter the house, if she desired it.

"I am cold," she replied, "but do not alight on my account, I shall be warmer presently."

"Miss! too,—I heard her footman call her Miss," said the ostler in a rabbit-skin cap, to his assistant, whose jolter head boasted no better covering than one made of moth-eaten drugget.

"Miss, indeed! See how measter bowed her over the step! the stage-coach passengers might stick vithin for ever, 'afore he'd ask 'em

to 'light. Now, Villiam, you're a cunnin 'un, can't you circumnawigate the chap in sweep's livery, and find out vat she's agoin' arter in sich a night as this."

"An' vat good 'ud that do me, I vonder," said rabbit-skin's assistant, in sulky reply, while he threw the traces over the back of the jaded post-horse. "If I vas you, Tummas, I'd ask my own questions; if I vas principal, I'd be principal, that's all—I vouldn't be the pump ven I could be the pump-handle."

"Don't you be saacy, Villiam," retorted the 'principal,' "I puts up vith a dale from you, I'd never put up vith from no 'un else, because vy?—because o' yer infermity, ye poor lame creeter. Now don't ye go for to jump about in the fog, or ye may get your vooden peg into the gutter, as ye did last night, and then have to vait 'til I takes it out—take it easy, Villiam, and I'll manage sweep's livery myself; only remember, if the hintelligence vat I receives is vorth hanny thing, remember, Villiam, remember, no halves! no poundage! I'll be the pump-handle myself to-night, I'll take yer

advice, ye poor, lame, fatherless, friendless creetur, I vil,"—and the ostler *en chef* turned with an air of offended dignity into the house.

"I dare say ye vil," growled Master Drugget, as he limped after the poor horses, who instinctively pursued their way to the stable—"ye find it pleasanter to stand by a good fire than to vork at a vet oss; ye has no more brains than a currycomb, and the only reason yer so *up* in the vold is just because ye know how to use the brains of others—pump-handle, indeed! vat a purty boy ye are, in rabbit-skins!"—and having so said, he hung his cracked and dirty horn lantern on a nail; twisted what in Ireland would be called a 'lock of straw' into a lump, and commenced rubbing down one of the panting animals, accompanying his labour, which certainly was not hard, with a low hissing sound, resembling in tone the sportive music of a nest of snakes:—by the way, all ostlers make a noise of that description when cleaning horses, and though I have often inquired *why* they did it, I never received a satisfactory explanation.

I remember once a young Irish groom, who was a most vociferous hisser, he hissed when he cleaned the phaeton, he hissed while brushing clothes and shoes, and, above all, he hissed, like a thousand rattle-snakes, while rubbing down the pony. Had this incessant, serpent-like noise taken place anywhere but directly under my bed-room window, curious as I was as to its origin, I should not have prohibited its continuance, but it had become quite unbearable.

"What do you make that noise for, Andrew?"

"Is it the noise of the brush, you mean, ma'am?"

"No, no—that horrid noise,—there, like a snake."

"Oh, I don't know, ma'am, only every groom does it,—it's natural to grooms, ma'am.

"Well, I am sorry for it, Andrew, for you must be unnatural, and give it up."

"Be dad, ma'am," said poor Andrew, scratching his head with one hand, and touching his hat with the other, "Be dad, ma'am, it's glory

I would, in obliging you in any thing, but my father, he groomed Lord Mountjoy's 'Black Jack,' he did it, and all belonging to me, and I'm certain I could'nt make no hand of the horse without it—sure, ma'am, it's an innocent noise."

"Very likely, but it disturbs me, it prevents my sleeping in the morning, or writing in the day."

"Faix, I'm sorry for that, but early rising's a fine thing, and Bess is lost for a canter, and the masther says it does you good, ma'am, and sure it's a pleasure I'd take in saddling her for ye twinty times a-day."

"Very likely, Andrew, but you must leave off that noise, and pray do not let me have to speak of it again." The next morning I had comparative rest. 'Rome was not built in a day,' nor was Andrew's habit overcome in a week; there were occasional bursts of hissing, suppressed by a heavy sigh, and Andrew seemed dispirited.

"Andrew, the harness looks rusty, and the

brasses dim." Poor Andrew touched his hat to my reproof, and his face lengthened.

"Andrew, the mud of yesterday is not half washed off these wheels." Andrew sighed.

"Andrew, the pony's coat is rough, and she seems losing her spirit."

"So she is, ma'am," said Andrew, "and, axing yer honour's pardon, so am I, and no wonder we should."

"Is she not well?"

"Faix, I don't know, ma'am—she's rather down in the mouth, as ye notice yerself, ma'am."

"Does she eat her oats?"

"Oh, catch her laving them, that's all."

"Then what's the matter with her?"

"Why then, be dad! ma'am, if you won't be angry, I'll be afther telling ye—it's just on account of the bit of music."

"The what, Andrew?"

"The bit of music, ma'am,—you understand, what you call the hiss."

I could not help smiling. "Faix, ma'am," persisted Andrew, "no horse ever did without

it, nor man neither, that's to say, a horse-man, and its loth I'd be to lave my place, but it's what I can't manage at all, is the cleaning and the pony, without it—as I tould ye before, ma'am, *it's our nature!*"

And so I suppose it is. More than an hour had elapsed before the post-horses were put to Miss Lorton's carriage; the smiths were tipsy, or something or other occurred, which occasioned (at least so the landlord assured the lady) the first delay which had ever occurred at his house, as 'he had the finest cattle on the road.' While Miss Lorton's carriage was preparing to drive off, a postchaise rattled up to the door, and there was another demand for horses.

Mary Lorton, overcome and perplexed by harassing delay, fancied she saw some person speaking to one of her postillions, and, irritated beyond patience, she desired her footman to desire him to mount immediately.

The man obeyed, and though the horses commenced their journey at a spanking pace,

they were unable to continue it with anything like rapidity. Despite the lights, Mary herself could hardly see the wheelers' heads,—the footman assured his young lady, from the driving-box, that all would be as she desired soon, as there was little doubt but the fog would clear towards midnight, and it was full moon, or nearly so. Suddenly there was a violent shock:—the carriage was upset, and the horses were dragging it on at a fearful rate. Mary closed her eyes, for she saw the footman flung off the driving-box, and she dared not look again. Magdalene screamed at first, but soon recovered her presence of mind, and tried to support Mary. At last the carriage stopped, and both breathed again. One of the lights had been quite extinguished, and the other, from the position of the carriage, lying as it was on one side, was completely useless. Mary could not move any of the glasses. At length the top window was broken, the door opened, and Miss Lorton, half dead from fright and cold, lifted out. She was so bewildered that

she knew not who it was had rendered her this kindly office. When she stood upon the earth her head reeled, the chill shivering fog enveloped her as with a shroud; she wished to ask the fate of her servant, but she could not speak,—her tongue trembled, her limbs were paralyzed,—she thought that through the gloom she discerned the outline of another carriage, and the idea of assistance was very welcome to her,—at last she found words to request the person who supported her, to assist Magdalene to alight, and another stranger replied, that she should be attended to immediately; the same voice requested her to enter their carriage, and explained that they had come up at the moment of the accident, adding that the lady could sit in their vehicle until her own was put in order. Mary moved towards the carriage, without feeling able to utter her thanks for this unexpected shelter, —the stranger who had extricated her from her danger had not yet spoken, though she had not noted the circumstance. She placed

one foot upon the step. A sudden gust of wind cleared the fog, and instantly a gleam of moonlight shot across the road, and rested upon her own chariot. She looked back, and saw Magdalene's head projecting through the window—the light was indeed momentary, no sooner come than gone, but as the atmosphere darkened she heard the voice of her faithful attendant, in tones of bitter agony, command her not to enter the stranger's carriage.

"On your life, Miss Lorton,—look who it is, —help, help,—Oh God! will no one assist,—will no one save her!"

Mary staggered back, but it was too late,—she was forced into the carriage, and the last sounds she heard, as it dashed rapidly on its unhallowed way, were the screams of her faithful but powerless Magdalene.

"Sacre! she has fainted," said one ruffian to another. "Devil take all women—a poor one is a curse, and a rich one is little better; what am I to do now?"

"She'll come too, never fear that—beauti-

fully managed, was it not? What a lucky fog." When any sudden good fortune overtakes those who go preaching about special guardianship, they commence talking of the special interposition of Providence,—I wonder what they would call this?

"The play is not yet finished," grumbled his companion: "we must hasten on, for the other will soon raise an alarm."

There was a pause—the first speaker continued—

"You must confess that it has been a most unromantic abduction,—no pistols, nothing unpleasant, and I apprehended so much from the spirit of that squalling girl.—Gad! how she screamed, I wish the Devil had her, with all my soul,—she knows more than I desire;—but what are you routing in that corner of the carriage for?"

"Her purse. She dropped her purse coming in,—lucky it wasn't in the road, that is, lucky for me, for she of course will never know *where* she lost it."

"Augh!" said the other, "you are, after all, but a pitiful scelerat!—yet you must account for its contents to me, you know,—partnership, partnership, eh!"

"Oh! yes!—I told you she would soon revive."

* * * *

It so happened that the ostler and his assistant were together in the stable of the same posting-house where the four horses had been ordered by Mary Brown Lorton on that unfortunate journey,—the fog had disappeared, and the moon was shining brightly.

"I say, Tummas, I'm hanged if that 'ere isn't the same po'chay as you cojered vith them rum'uns about, in double quick time, 'as the hare said ven she run for it.'"

"There's dust in yer eyes, Villiam, ye poor creeter, there is," replied the principal, "I'd be glad to know how you could tell the difference of po'chay's at this hour o' the noight!"

"I tell thee vat," said the lame ostler, looking his vould-be-tyrant in the face very

earnestly, "I tell thee vat I thinks,—I thinks I'z a spoiled my own trade."

"Vat do you mean, Villiam, ye poor hignorant creetur, by spoilin' yer *own* trade—pray ven did you set up for yerself, I'd be glad to know?"

"I spoilt my own trade, ven I tould you to set up for yerself, that's all," replied William.

"Have ye done the night's vork?" inquired Thomas, without heeding the bent of his comrade's observation.

"Ay, till the vaggons come up, and the nightengales."

"Vat did ye do with the old beans?"

"Mixed them with the hoats for the gemm'ns oss that's lost its teeth; his measter come in here a while agone, to see if his oss vas feedin' (vich I must say I thought vas hacting in a wery ungen'man like vay, as if I'd starve his oss), but he vas quite satisfied ven he saw him at them still,—it vas the beans, poor hanimal, that he could not swaller, the hoats was easy done for —fine things old beans to amuse an old oss."

"Have you seen to the gentlemen's horses in the best stable?"

"Have I not! Those poor hignorant London hanimals vould overheat themselves, if I did not take care, so I did the old trick, Tummas."

"And so then, Villiam, you may go to bed, I vill sit up for the vaggons; and don't ye mind getting up till I call you."

William looked again earnestly at his companion, and shook his head.

"Yer a going to be a member to the society vat prewents cruelty to hanimals, I'm thinkin," he said. "I see you've quite taken to pumpin on yer own account, you're larnin a trick or two, ye are,—but, Tummas, take care, ye've not long set up a vorkin' yer own oss, it's but veakly, take care it don't play ye a trick, old 'un! ye hadn't me to help ye this turn, but *I sees it,* plain as a sign-post. Mind ye, Tummas, no share in the ———" He turned the palm of his left hand upwards, and struck it two or three times with the forefinger of his right hand,—"no share in the danger."

"Ga-a-long, ye poor hignorant, ungrateful, afflicted creeter,—ga-a-long to yer bed, do,—ye've no generosity, nor humanity,—doan't ye see how I vishes to spare ye."

"Thank-ee," retorted William drily, while limping off.

"I'm glad he's gone," said Rabbit-skin, "I'm huneasy in my mind, though I doan't know vy,—only vee public characters seldom gets a guinea vithout havin summut to do for it."

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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